The Summer of the Ubume

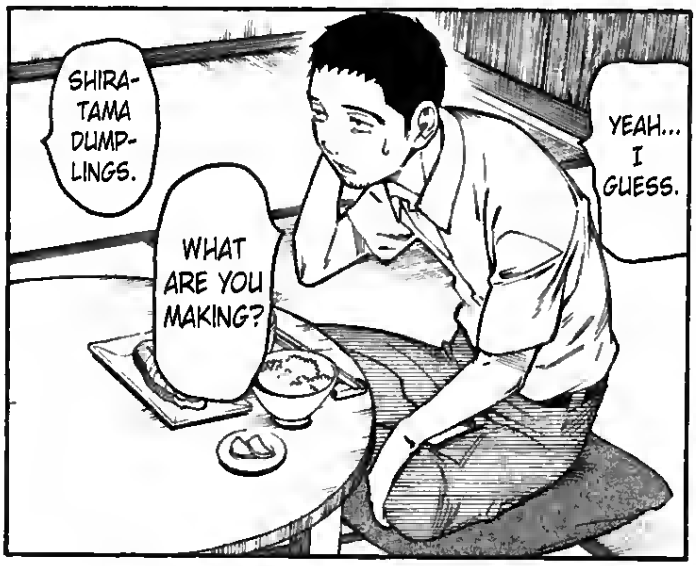
KYOUGOKU NATSUHIKO
&
SHIMIZU AKI

しきがない
TRANSLATION & TYPESETTING SANA

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER
2

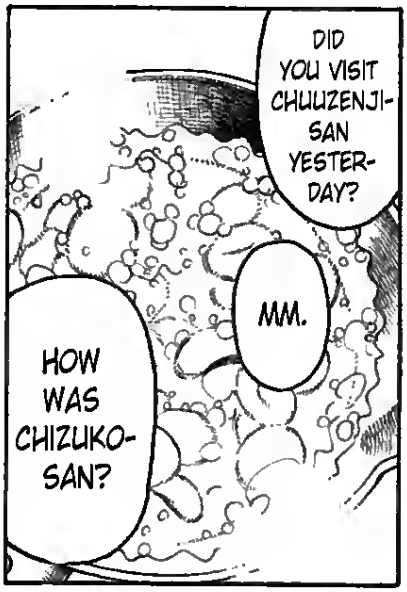
DID YOU HAVE A BAD DREAM LAST NIGHT?
Yesterday felt like a dream...

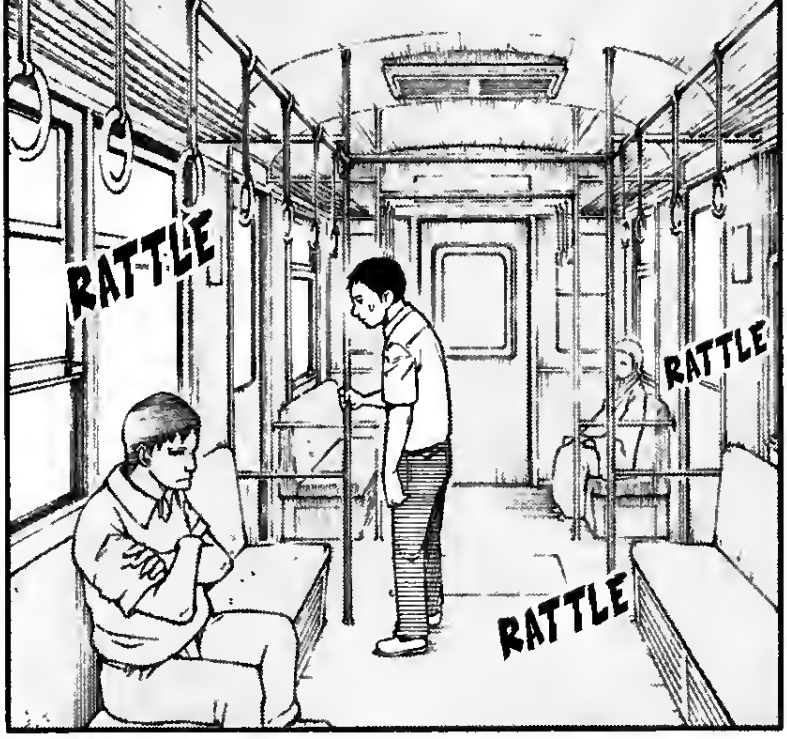

SHIRATAMA DUMPLINGS.
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
YEAH... I GUESS.

YOU WERE GROANING IN YOUR SLEEP.

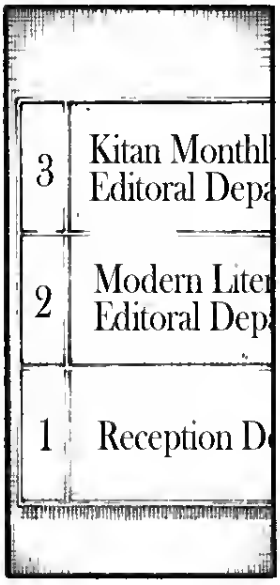
OH, SO SHE WENT TO THAT FESTIVAL AFTER ALL.
?
Festival?

CHIZU-SAN?
OH, SHE WASN'T HOME.


DID YOU VISIT CHUUZENJI-SAN YESTERDAY?
MM.
HOW WAS CHIZUKO-SAN?



NOTE The sign says "Kitansha Publishing Company"



UM, EXCUSE ME...
IS CHUU-ZENJI-KUN IN?
BY THE WAY, YOU WORKED WITH DR. KUMAGUSA ON SLIME MOLD RESEARCH BEFORE THE WAR, RIGHT? HIS DEATH ANNI-VERSATY IS COMING UP, SO WRITE US SOMETHING CREEPY!
YOU COULD USE THE WORK, RIGHT?
WELL, IF IT'S NOT SEKI-GUCHI-SENSEI!
COME IN, COME IN!
ANYWAY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED WITH THAT STORY CHUUZENJI-KUN WAS WORKING ON? THE ONE ABOUT THE DISAPPEARING HUSBAND?
I'D LOVE TO, BUT HE ONLY DIED A FEW YEARS AGO... IT'S TOO SOON FOR A MEMORIAL ARTICLE...
OH! SO SENSEI WAS INTERESTED IN THAT, TOO!?
THAT WAS A JUICY RUMOR! UNFORTU-NATELY, THE STORY ENDED UP BEING A DEAD END.
...SO IT WAS ALL JUST A RUMOR?
NO, BUT CHUU-ZENJI-KUN REFUSED TO WORK ON IT.

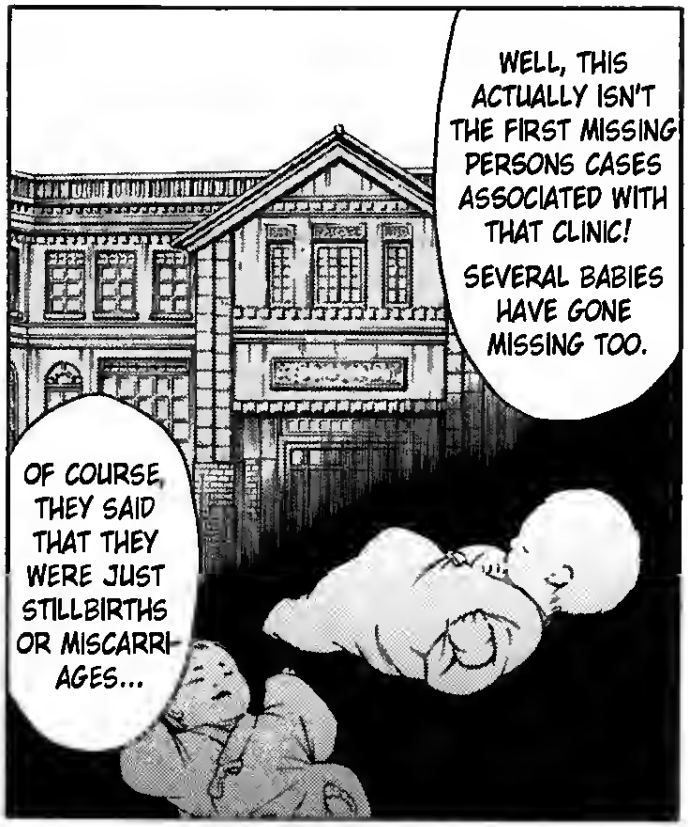
HUH? SURE, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RUMORS, BUT YOU CAN JUST REPORT THE FACTS.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE!
THERE'S REALLY NO WAY TO AVOID DRAGGING THE WIFE INTO THE STORY.

I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT I JUST CAN'T DO IT!
KITAN MONTHLY ISN'T THAT KIND OF LOWBROW TABLOID TRASH!
WE HAVE JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS!

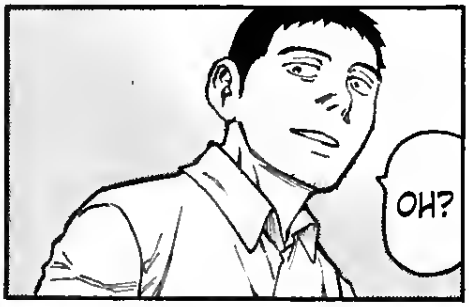
EVEN IF I WROTE A NEUTRAL ARTICLE, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO AVOID THE RUMORS.
AND THEN AN INNOCENT CHILD WOULD BE STUCK WITH THOSE RUMORS FOR THE REST OF HIS OR HER LIFE!
OH... UM...

WE HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THE UNBORN CHILD, BOSS!
THERE MUST BE A REASON WHY THE FATHER SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED LIKE THAT, RIGHT?

HAHA...
Like brother, like sister...
SO I TOLD HER THAT SHE HAD TO STAY TRUE TO HER JOURNALISTIC IDEALS!
IT WAS LIKE A VEIL WAS LIFTED FROM MY EYES!
WHEN SHE SAID THAT,
BUT THAT GIRL IS ALWAYS TEN STEPS AHEAD OF YOU!
SHE'S A REAL PROFESSIONAL!
I'LL ADMIT, WHEN I FIRST MET HER, I TOOK ONE LOOK AT THAT CUTE FACE AND THOUGHT "SHE'S NEVER GONNA SURVIVE IN THIS BUSINESS!"
THAT GIRL'S GOT TALENT!
WELL, I SHOULD GET GOING...
I don't think I'm going to get any info on the Kuonji Clinic here.
HELL NO!
I'VE GOTTA WATCH MY BACK, OR SHE'S GOING TO TAKE MY JOB!
HAVE YOU TOLD HER ANY OF THIS?
HA HA HA
WAIT, SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI...


WELL, THIS ACTUALLY ISN'T THE FIRST MISSING PERSONS CASES ASSOCIATED WITH THAT CLINIC!
SEVERAL BABIES HAVE GONE MISSING TOO.
OF COURSE, THEY SAID THAT THEY WERE JUST STILLBIRTHS OR MISCARRIAGES...

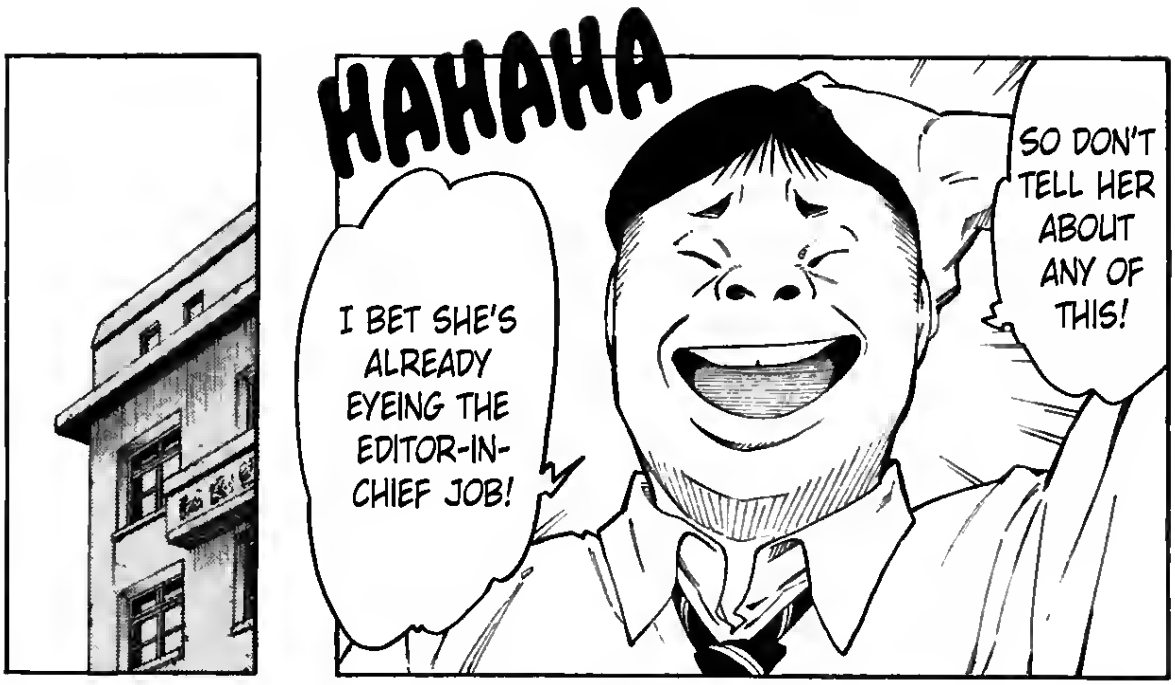
ALTHOUGH WE DROPPED THE STORY, I DID SOME RESEARCH INTO THAT CLINIC... IT SOUNDS PRETTY SHADY.


OH?

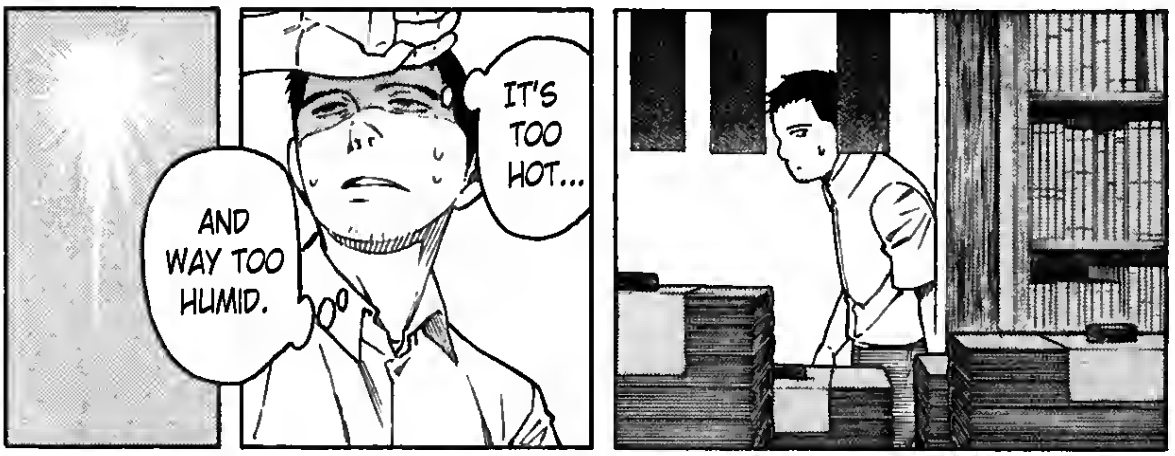
AND NOW THEIR NEW DOCTOR HAS VANISHED...
BUT THEY HAVEN'T EVEN FILED A MISSING PERSONS REPORT.

I FELT LIKE I WAS REALLY ONTO SOMETHING, BUT CHUUZENJI-KUN MADE ME DROP IT.

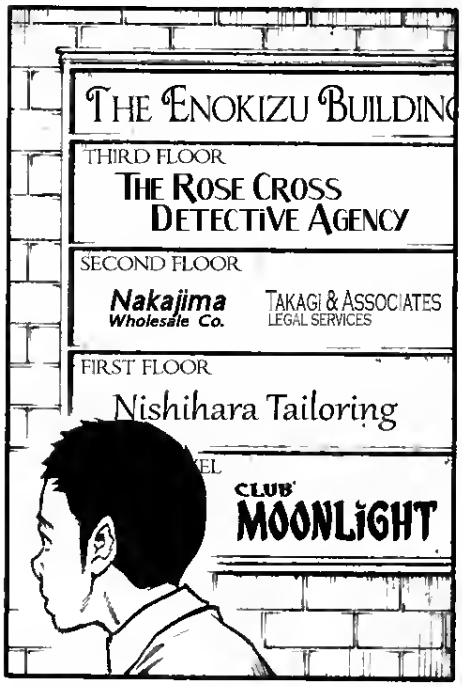
BUT WITNESSSES HAVE SAID THAT THEY HEARD BABIES CRYING.
SUPPOSEDLY, A NURSE DISAPPEARED AS WELL - THE POLICE EVEN GOT INVOLVED IN THAT CASE.


HAHAHA
I BET SHE'S ALREADY EYEING THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF JOB!
SO DON'T TELL HER ABOUT ANY OF THIS!

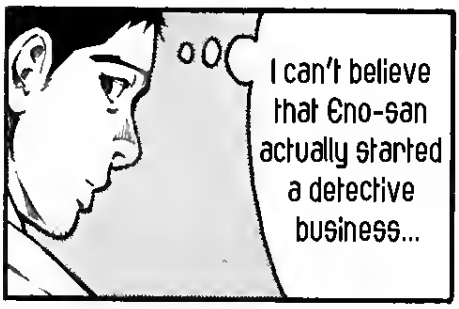
古本販売
中古買取価値保証
古本
買入
古書
買取
月刊
美容
婦人

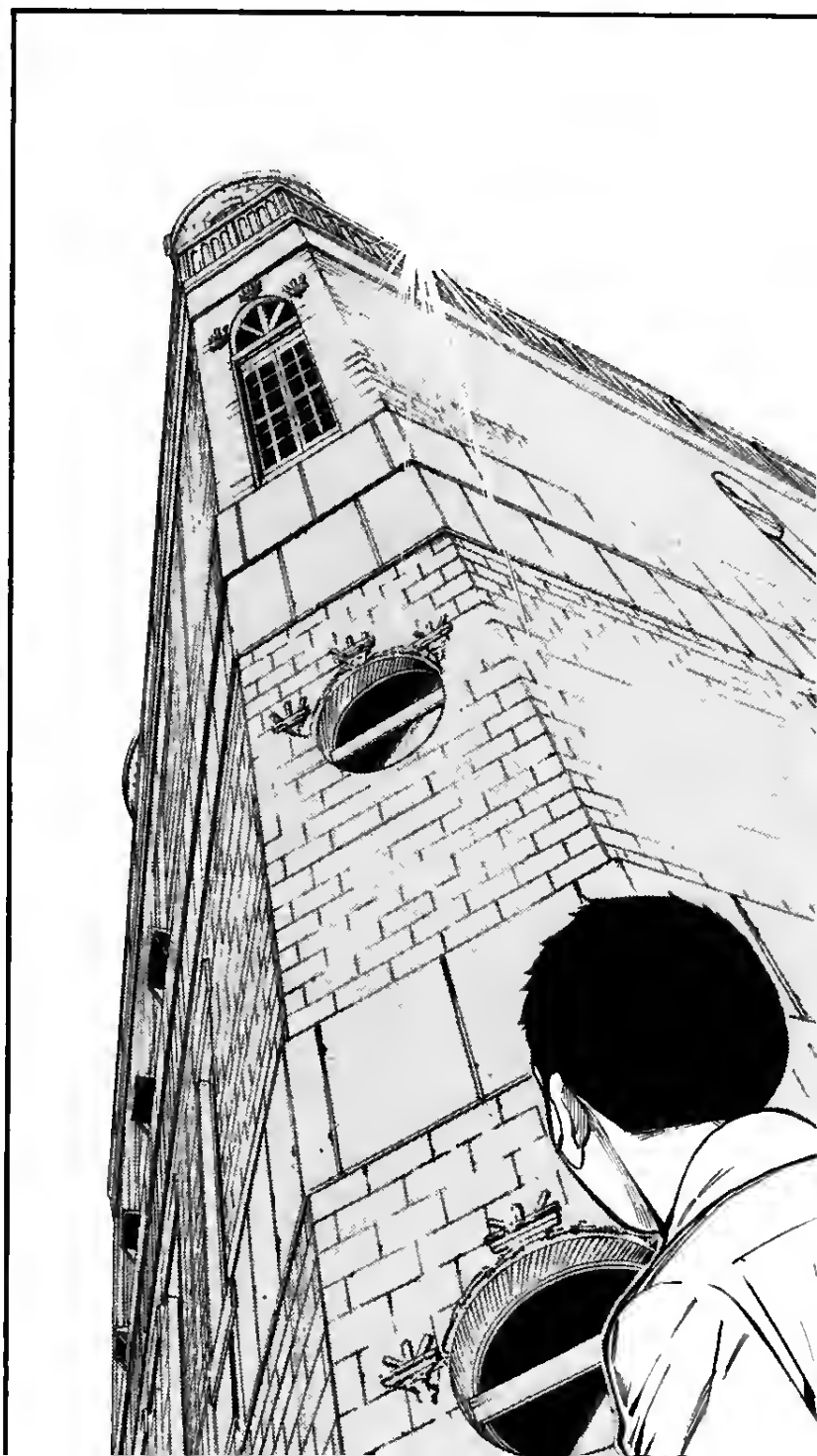

IT'S TOO HOT...
AND WAY TOO HUMID.

名物
ひとくち大福


THE ENOKIZU BUILDING
THIRD FLOOR
THE ROSE CROSS DETECTIVE AGENCY
SECOND FLOOR
Nakajima Wholesale Co.
TAKAGI & ASSOCIATES LEGAL SERVICES
FIRST FLOOR
Nishihara Tailoring
CLUB MOONLIGHT

HIRD FLOOR
THE ROSE CR
DETECTIVI


I can't believe that Eno-san actually started a detective business...

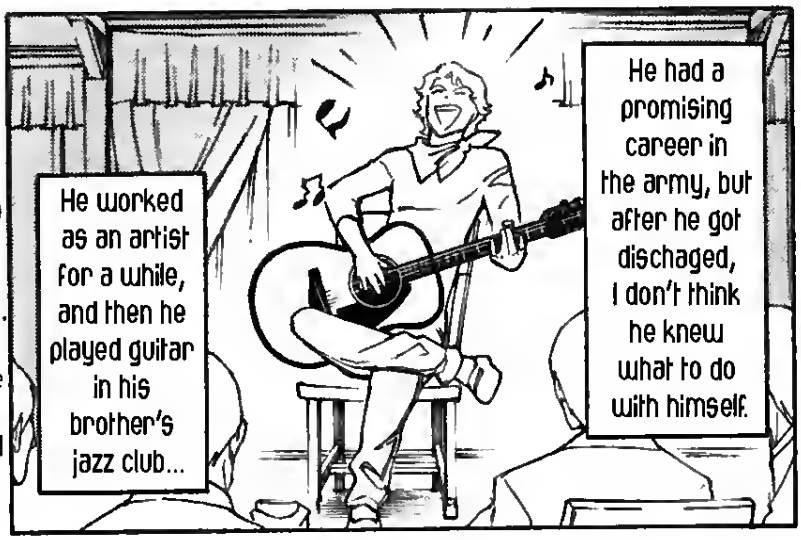


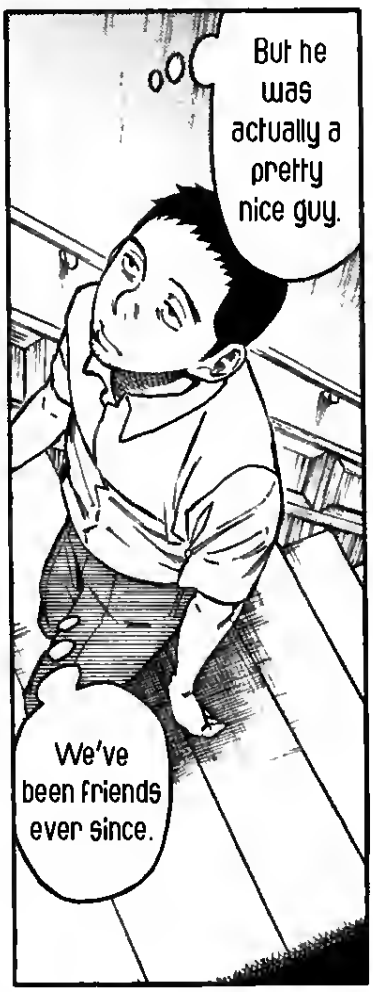
Enokizu Reijirou...
We went to the same high school, but he was a year older.
He was handsome, wealthy, and talented at absolutely everything.
He had so many admirers that he ruled over the school like an emperor.
So basically, he was the polar opposite of me...

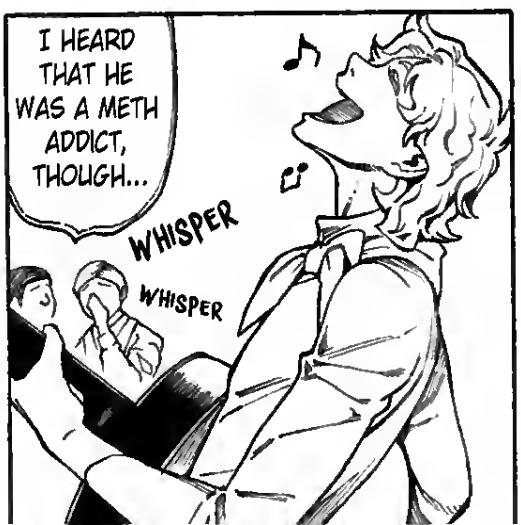
If not for Kyougoku-dou, Enokizu and I would never have even met.
PARDON ME, ENOKIZU-SEMPAI.
I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE MY FRIEND, SEKIGUCHI TATSUMI-KUN.
YOU LOOK LIKE A MONKEY!
WOW!
HE SUFFERS FROM DEPRESSION, SO DON'T PICK ON HIM.
ANYWAY, YOU'RE SO MANIC THAT MAYBE YOU'LL BE A GOOD influence ON EACH OTHER.
I BET YOU'RE RIGHT!
HA HA HA HA HA
I...
SHOUK
UM...

NOTE

Methamphetamine (sold under the name "Philopon") was a big problem in 1950s Japan. Although it was made illegal in 1951, it had been given to soldiers and workers during the war and was highly addictive. Philopon was believed to send people into a state of violent insanity.


He worked as an artist for a while, and then he played guitar in his brother's jazz club...
He had a promising career in the army, but after he got dischaged, I don't think he knew what to do with himself.





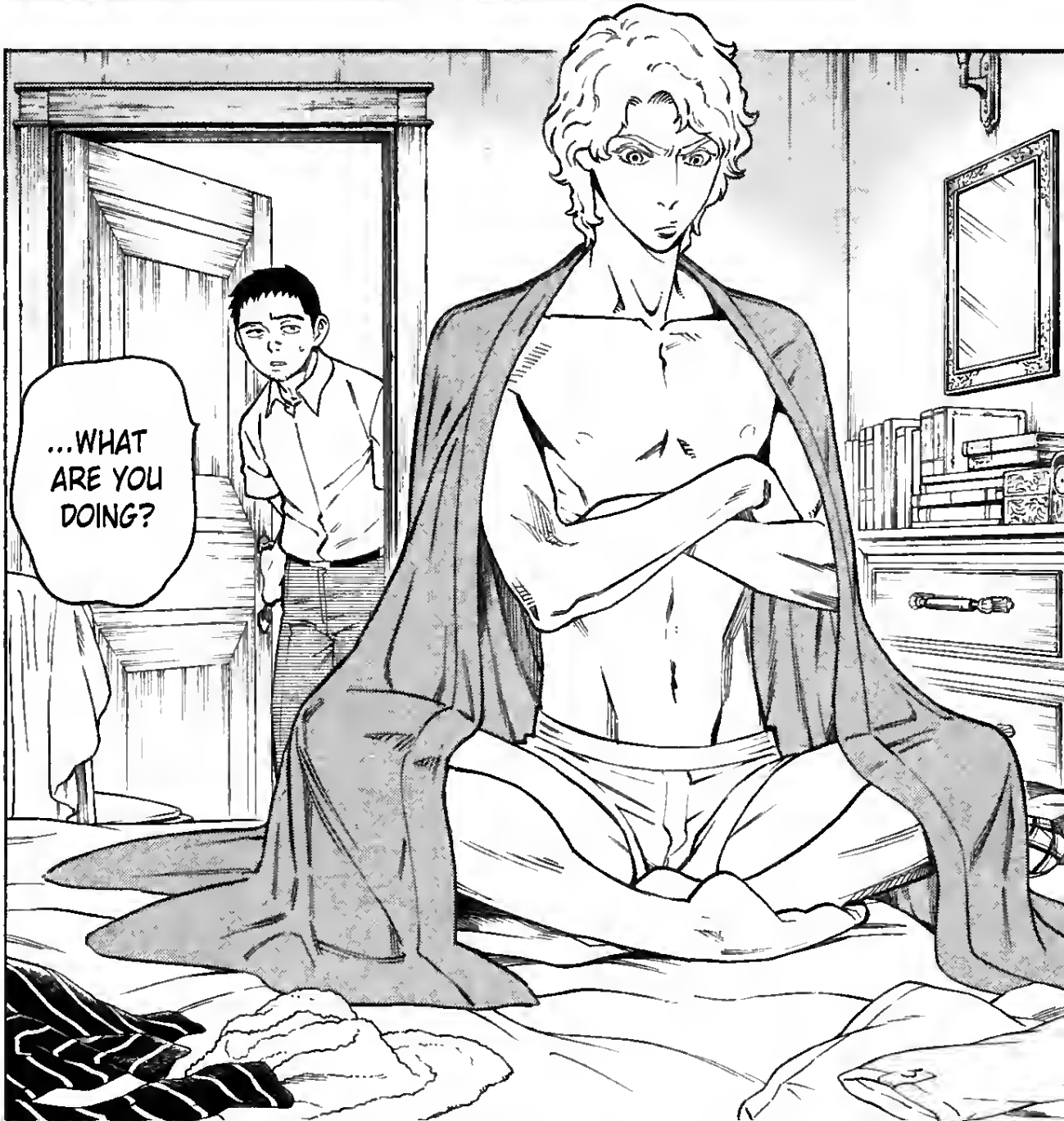
CREAK
THE ROSE CROSS DETECTIVE AGENCY
"THE ROSE CROSS DETECTIVE AGENCY?"
ITT SOUNDS OVERBLOWN AND RIDI-CULOUS...
TYPICAL ENO-SAN.
A few months ago, he decided to buy a building and rent it out to tenants.
He also started a detective business.
SO WHERE'S THE GREAT DETEC-TIVE?
That's Yasukazu Torakichi, nicknamed Kazutora.
OH, HELLO THERE, SENSEI!
He's the son of one of the Enokizu family servants, so Eno-san put him to work as an assistant.
HE'S STILL IN BED!
KIBASHUU WAS HERE LAST NIGHT, SO THEY WERE UP DRINKING.
SNORT

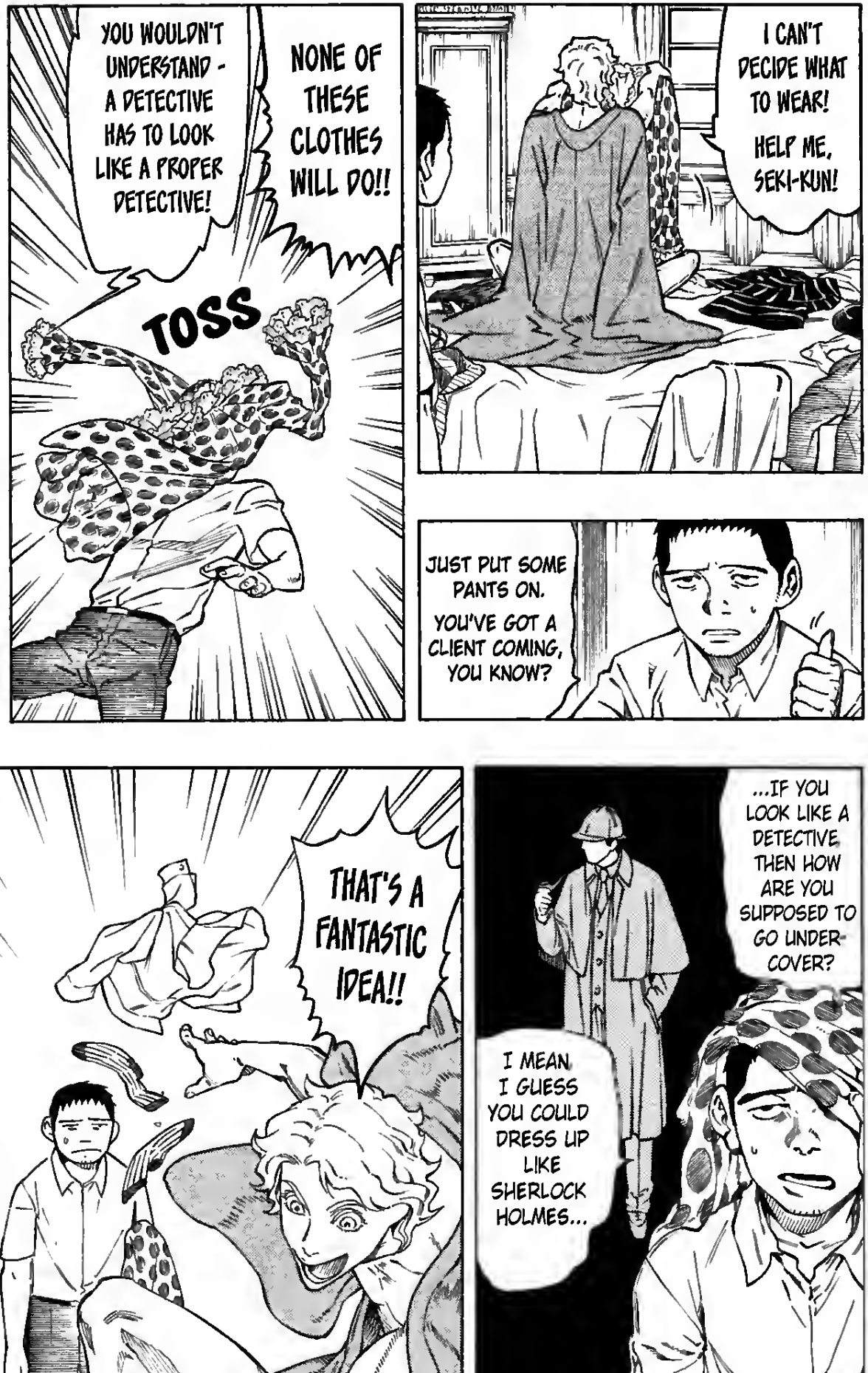
IT'S HOT AS HELL OUT THERE!
THE BOSS PARTIED A LITTLE TOO HARD AND KNOCKED IT OVER.
HE'S SUCH A MESS.
WHAT HAP-PENED TO THE FAN?
SNICKER
ENO-SAN ALWAYS GETS CARRIED AWAY...
SUPER DETECTIVE
A CLIENT !?
YEAH, OUR 4TH REAL CLIENT SO FAR!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE REALLY HAS CLIENTS...
SENSEI, DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DRAG HIM OUT OF BED?
HE GETS MAD WHEN I WAKE HIM UP.
WE'VE GOT A CLIENT COMING ANY MINUTE!

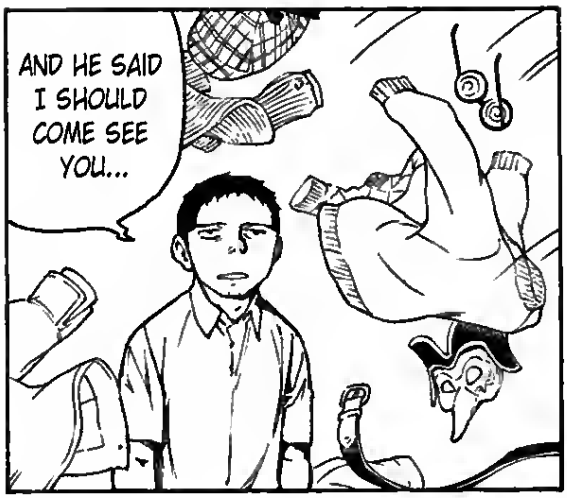
COME ON, ENO-SAN, IT'S TIME TO GET UP...
CREAK

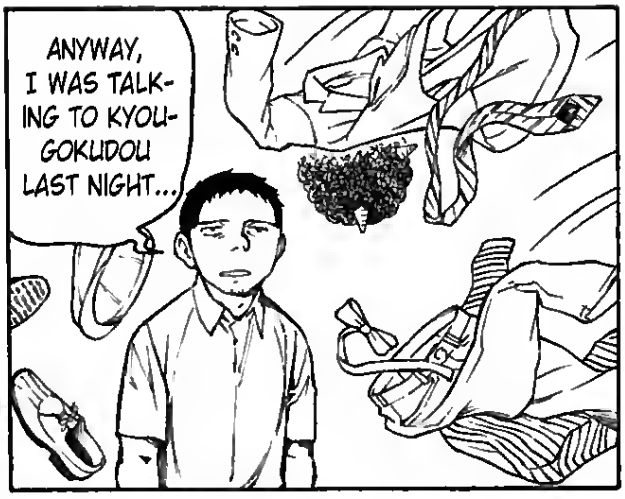
KNOCK KNOCK
ENO-SAN, ARE YOU AWAKE?

NO!

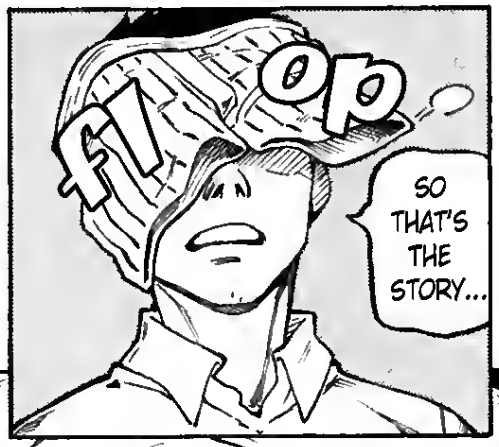

...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


I CAN'T DECIDE WHAT TO WEAR!
HELP ME, SEKI-KUN!
NONE OF THESE CLOTHES WILL DO!!
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND - A DETECTIVE HAS TO LOOK LIKE A PROPER DETECTIVE!
TOSS
JUST PUT SOME PANTS ON.
YOU'VE GOT A CLIENT COMING, YOU KNOW?
...IF YOU LOOK LIKE A DETECTIVE THEN HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO GO UNDER-COVER?
I MEAN I GUESS YOU COULD DRESS UP LIKE SHERLOCK HOLMES...
THAT'S A FANTASTIC IDEA!!


AND HE SAID I SHOULD COME SEE YOU...

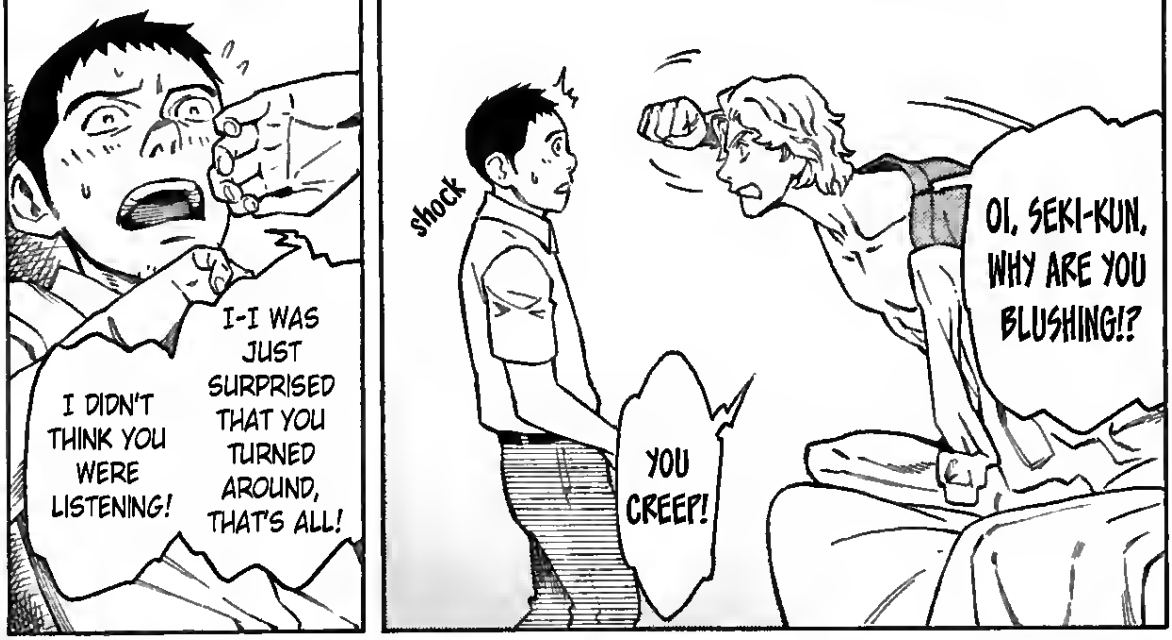

ANYWAY, I WAS TALKING TO KYOUGOKUDOU LAST NIGHT...

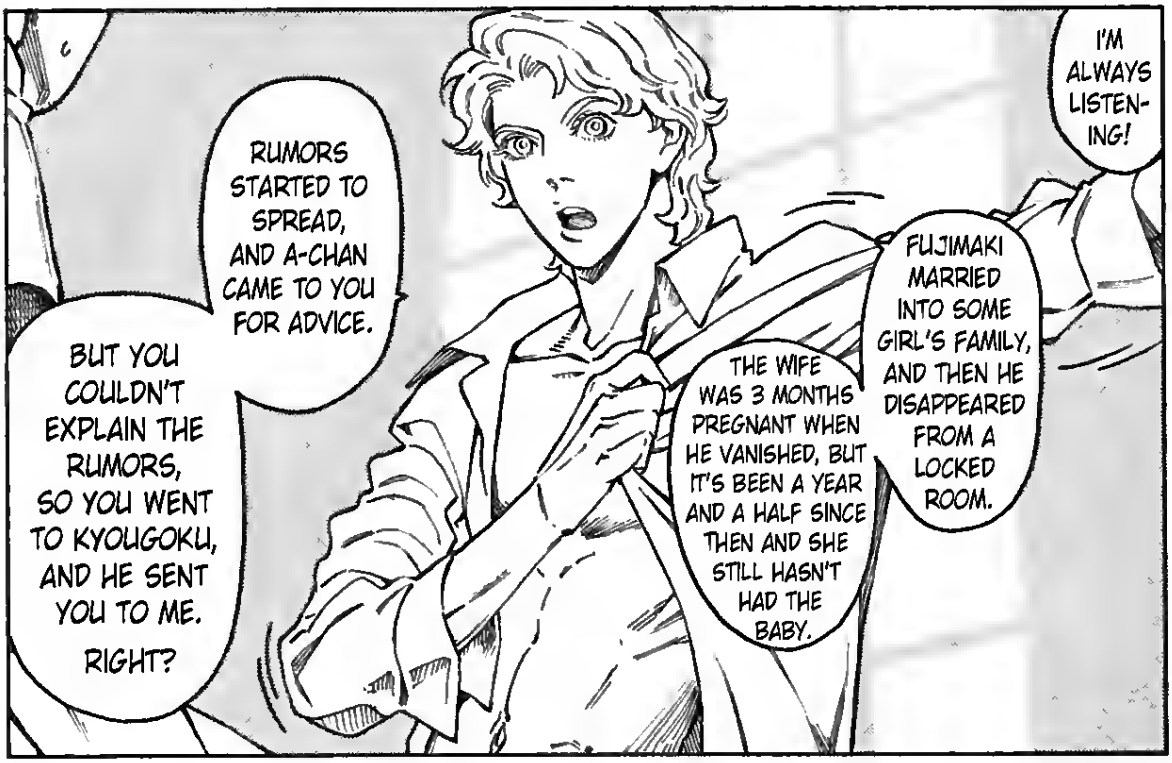
OH COME ON, ENO-SAN!
CAN'T YOU AT LEAST PRETEND TO PAY ATTENTION?


flop
SO THAT'S THE STORY...

He looks like one of those European porcelain dolls...

I AM PAYING ATTENTION!


I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE LISTENING!
I-I WAS JUST SURPRISED THAT YOU TURNED AROUND, THAT'S ALL!
shock
YOU CREEP!
OI, SEKI-KUN, WHY ARE YOU BLUSHING!?


BUT YOU COULDN'T EXPLAIN THE RUMORS, SO YOU WENT TO KYOUGOKU, AND HE SENT YOU TO ME. RIGHT?
RUMORS STARTED TO SPREAD, AND A-CHAN CAME TO YOU FOR ADVICE.
THE WIFE WAS 3 MONTHS PREGNANT WHEN HE VANISHED, BUT IT'S BEEN A YEAR AND A HALF SINCE THEN AND SHE STILL HASN'T HAD THE BABY.
FUJIMAKI MARRIED INTO SOME GIRL'S FAMILY, AND THEN HE DISAPPEARED FROM A LOCKED ROOM.
I'M ALWAYS LISTEN-ING!

BUT ...
IF I WANT MORE INFOR-MATION, I'LL ASK FOR IT!

I DON'T NEED ALL YOUR RAMBLING DETAILS! JUST GET TO THE POINT!
BUT YOUR STORY-TELLING SKILLS STINK!
SEE, I REALLY WAS PAYING ATTEN-TION!

ANYWAY, WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THAT CLINIC?
IJUUIN? KUMAMOTO? SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
IT'S KUONJI.
YOU WEREN'T PAYING ATTENTION AT ALL!

WHAT!? WHAT'S SO FUNNY!?
KAZUTORA! HEY, KAZU-TORA!!
HAHAHA
WAHAHAHAHA

pull
IT WAS KUNOU OR YAKUSHIJI OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, RIGHT?
NOTHING! HEY, WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE CLIENT WHO'S COMING TODAY?
WHAT'S WRONG, BOSS?
DASH
IT WAS KUONJI, BOSS.
PLEASE DON'T GET IT WRONG WHEN THE CLIENT IS HERE!

I'M SURE THAT THE CLIENT IS GOING TO ASK ME TO FIND POOR FUJIMAKI!!
SEE, SEKI-KUN? IT'S FATE!
I WAS BIT WORRIED ABOUT TAKING A JOB FROM SOMEONE WITH SUCH A WEIRD NAME, BUT NOW I KNOW WHAT SORT OF CASE IT IS!
He was going to take a case from the Kuonji Clinic without even knowing what they wanted?
SEKI-KUN! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A DETECTIVE FOR A DAY?
EH!? BUT YOU'RE THE DETECTIVE - I'M JUST A WRITER!

NOW, NOW, SEKI-KUN!
THERE'S NO TIME FOR COMPLAINING!
THE CLIENT WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE, AND I'M NOT WEARING ANY PANTS!
BUT ENO-SAN ...!!
THAT DOESN'T MATTER AT ALL, SEKI-KUN!
YOU HAVE MORE BACK-GROUND ON THE CASE, SO YOU SHOULD DO THE TALKING!
YOU'LL BE GREAT!
WAIT, I CAN'T...
YOU MIGHT LOOK MORE LIKE A MONKEY THAN A DETECTIVE, BUT AT LEAST YOU'RE DRESSED!
AND YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CASE THAN I DO!
...I SEE.
I don't doubt that at all.
THEY'RE BETTER AT IT THAN I AM!
NEITHER DO I! THAT'S WHAT THE POLICE ARE FOR!
I CAN'T BE A DETECTIVE! I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT CONDUCTING AN INVESTI-GATION!
Well, I admit that I do kinda want to meet someone who's involved with the case...

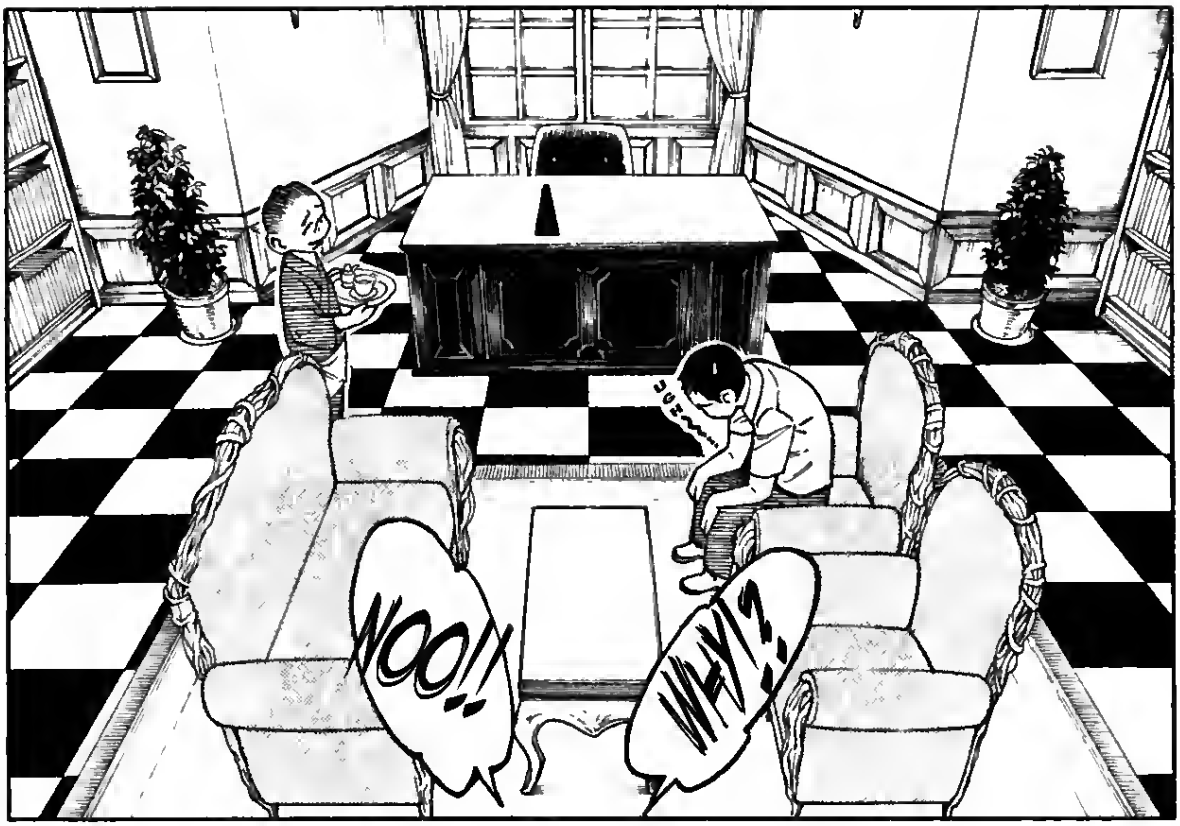
He started the detective business so he could make a profit off his weird sixth sense.
Last year, when Eno-san was still playing guitar at his brother's club...
He realized that he had an uncanny ability to find lost items and missing people.

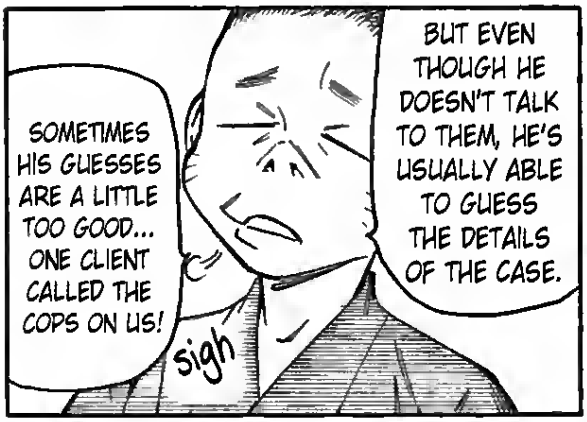
NO, IT'S BETTER IF YOU DO THE TALKING.
THEN, WHEN THE STORY REACHES ITS CLIMAX, I'LL SUDDENLY APPEAR AND SOLVE THE CRIME!

I guess he's some kind of psychic?
He's actually pretty accurate, though...
SO YOU'RE NOT GOING TO INVESTIGATE...
AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO INTERVIEW THE CLIENT?

SLAM
GET OUT! I'M NOT DRESSED!!

hmm

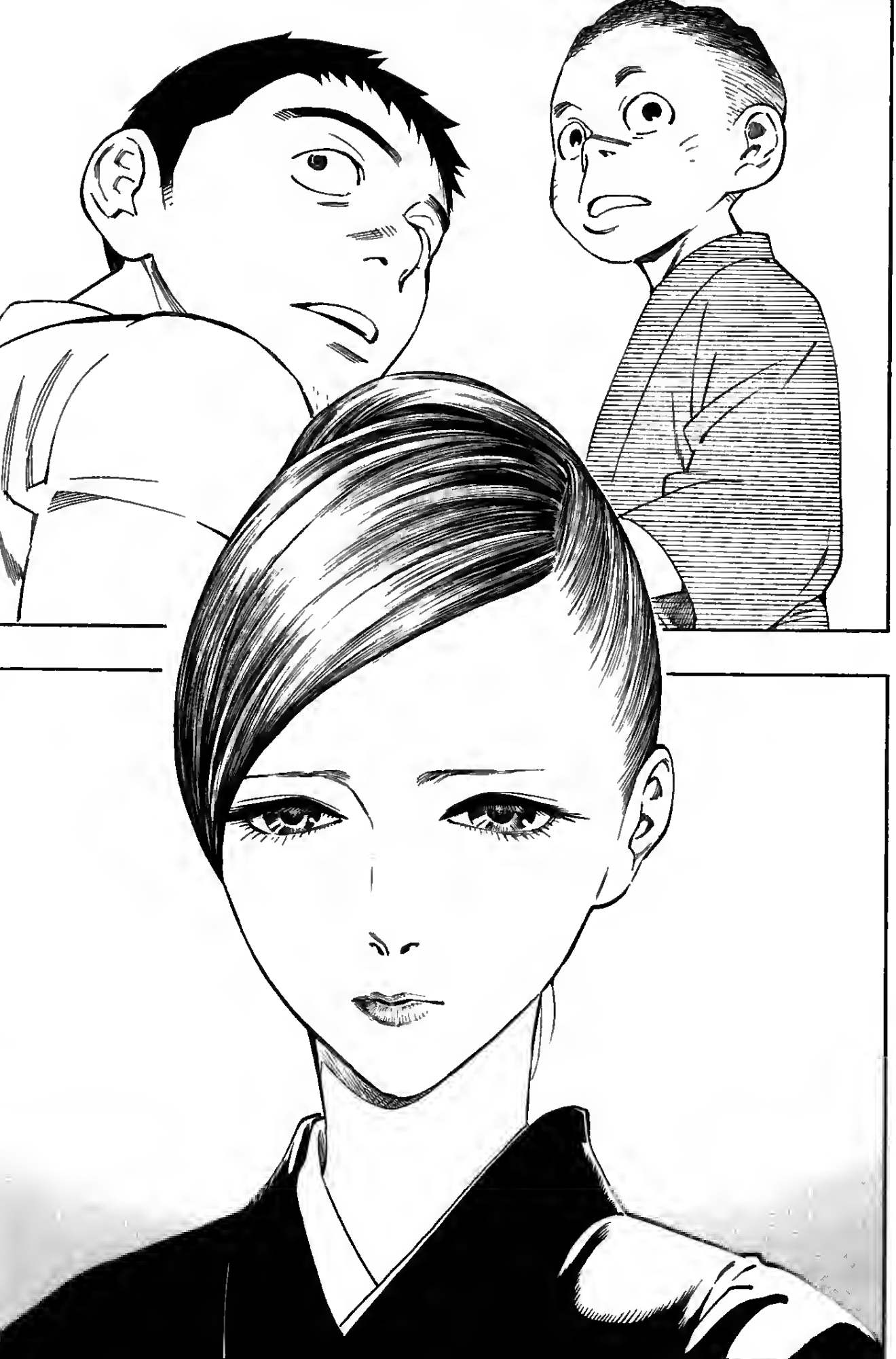

WOO!!
WHY!?

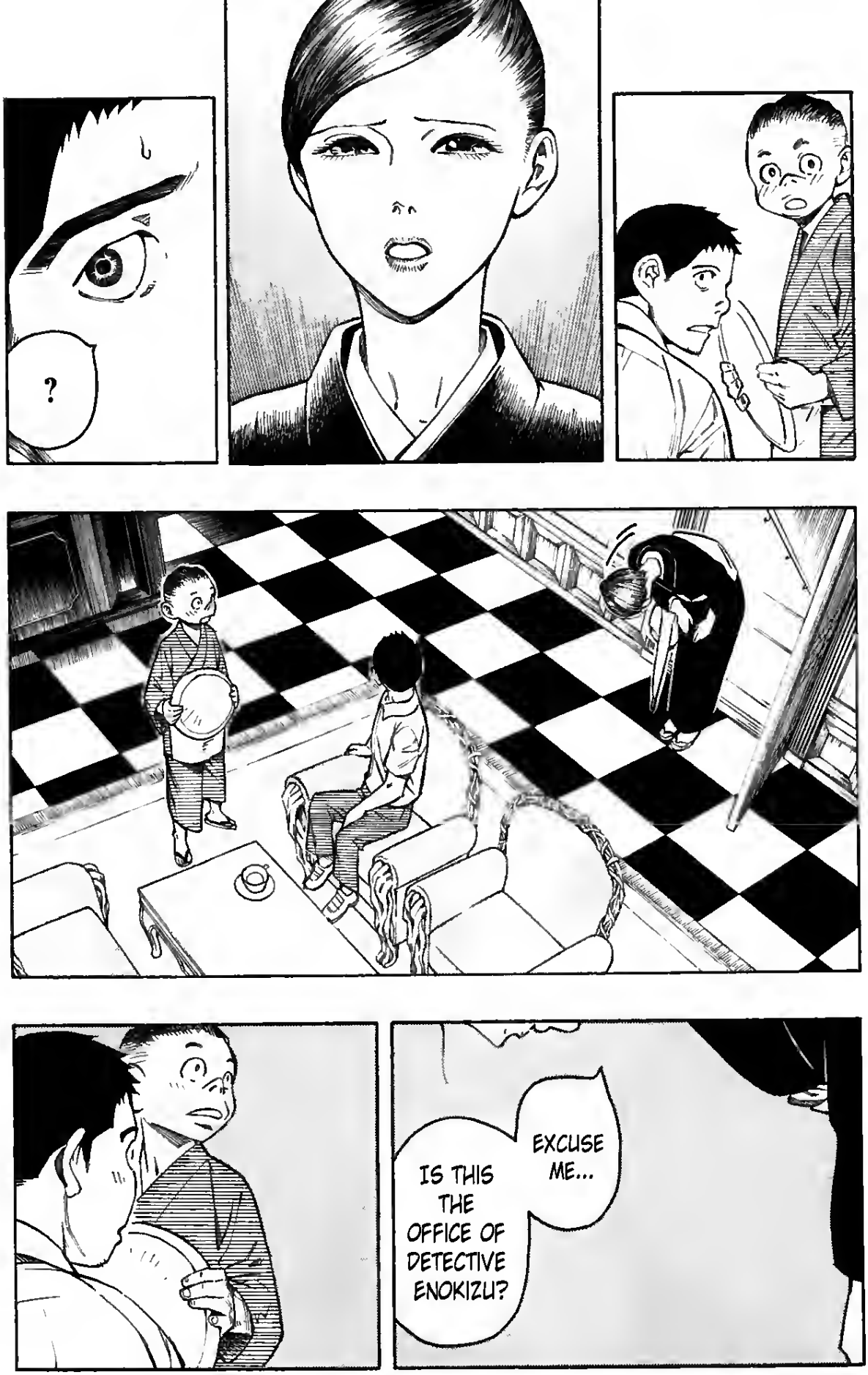

SOMETIMES HIS GUESSES ARE A LITTLE TOO GOOD... ONE CLIENT CALLED THE COPS ON US!
sigh
BUT EVEN THOUGH HE DOESN'T TALK TO THEM, HE'S USUALLY ABLE TO GUESS THE DETAILS OF THE CASE.

ARGGHHHH!!
IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
THE BOSS CAN'T STAND LISTENING TO CLIENTS GO ON AND ON.

!!

CREAK




?
EXCUSE ME...
IS THIS THE OFFICE OF DETECTIVE ENOKIZU?

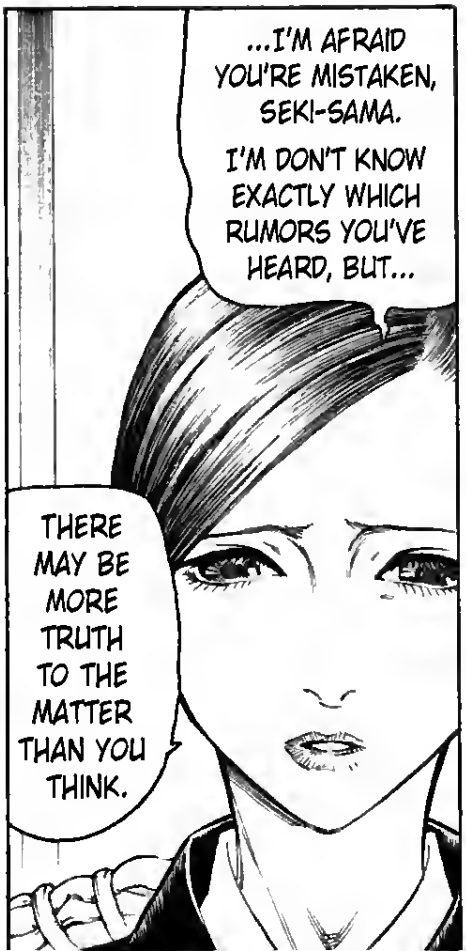
UH, SOMETHING CAME UP, SO THE BOSS IS RUNNING A LITTLE LATE.
UM...
GASP
AH!
PLEASE SIT HERE, KUONJI-SAMA!.
SO PLEASE TELL HIM EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CASE.
BUT THIS IS HIS CAPABLE ASSISTANT, SEKI-SENSEI!
AND I'M KUONJI RYOUKO.
NOD
UH, HELLO...
I'M... SEKI.

OH... UM, IT'S ALRIGHT.
THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO HEAR MY CASE.
I'M AFRAID IT'S A RATHER DIFFICULT STORY TO TELL, SO I APOLOGIZE IN ADVANCE.
ABOUT THE CASE...
SO...
WELL, AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW...
MY FAMILY RUNS A PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN ZOSHIGAYA.
YEAH, I'VE HEARD THE RUMORS... I MEAN...

W-WELL, THE RUMORS WERE BAD...
BUT AFTER SEEING YOU, I'M SURE THERE'S NO TRUTH TO THEM WHAT-SOEVER!
OH... I SEE...
THOSE TERRIBLE RUMORS..
OH...
SHOVE
S-SO THOSE RUMORS MUST HAVE BEEN NOTHING BUT BASELESS ACCUSATIONS!
WELL, I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND'S DISAPPEARANCE, BUT OBVIOUSLY YOU'RE NOT PREGNANT, SO...
IT'S SLANDER, THAT'S WHAT IT IS...

SO THE RUMORS HAVE SPREAD THIS FAR...
.....

WHAT!?

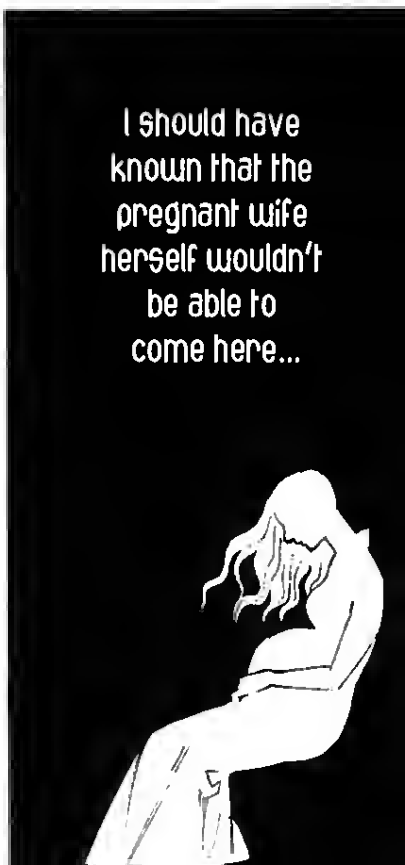

...I'M AFRAID YOU'RE MISTAKEN, SEKI-SAMA.
I'M DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHICH RUMORS YOU'VE HEARD, BUT...
THERE MAY BE MORE TRUTH TO THE MATTER THAN YOU THINK.

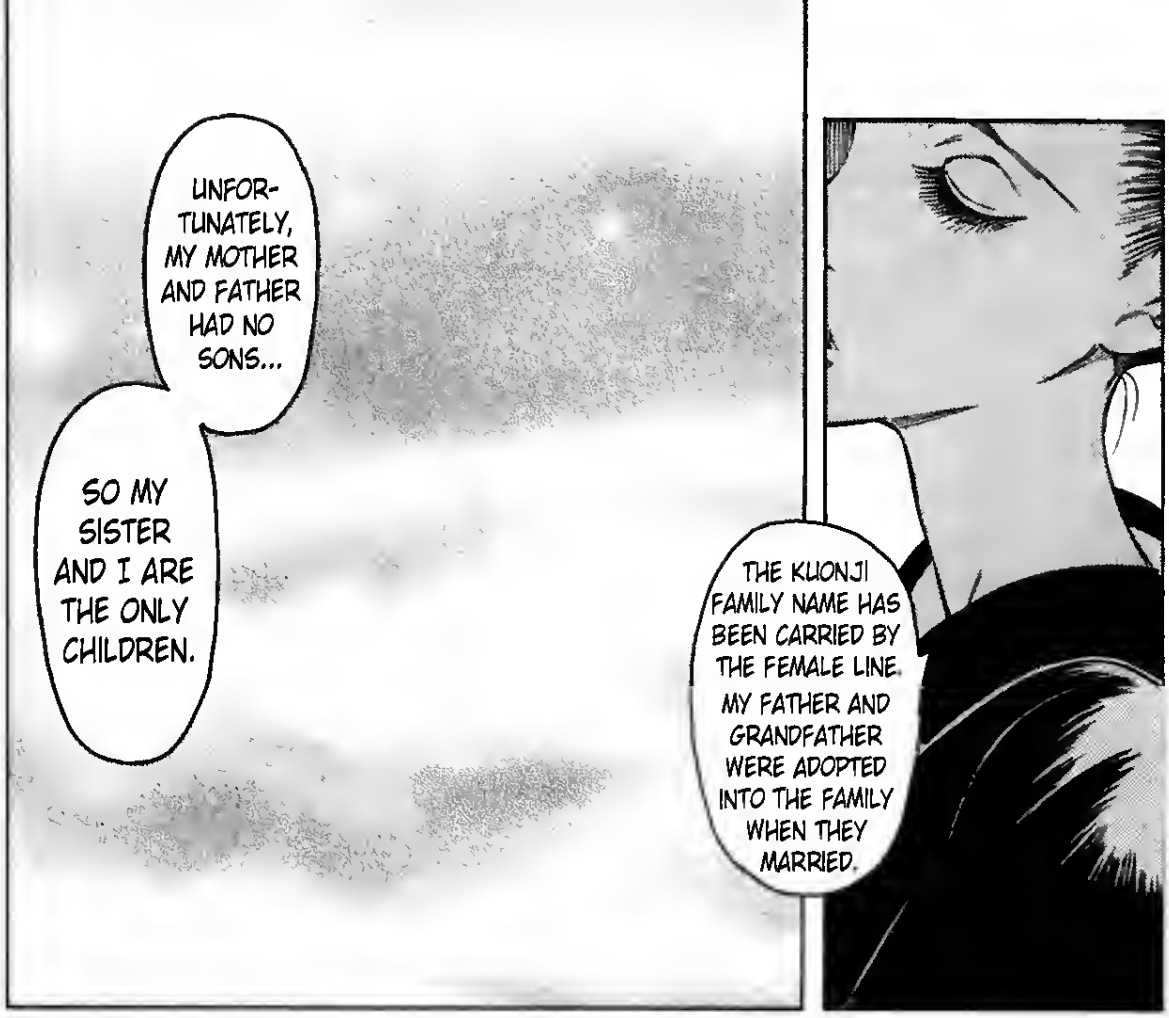
B-BUT OF COURSE I DON'T BELIEVE THEM!
NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THOSE LIES AFTER TAKING ONE LOOK AT YOU!

...MY SISTER, KUONJI KYOUKO, HAS BEEN PREGNANT FOR TWENTY MONTHS, AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF GIVING BIRTH...
AND JUST AS THE RUMORS SAY... MY SISTER'S HUSBAND, MAKIO, HAS VANISHED.

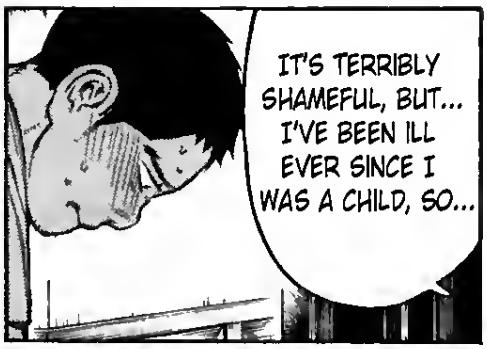
EMBARRASSED

Where are you, Eno-san!?
UM...
I...
OH...


I should have known that the pregnant wife herself wouldn't be able to come here...


UNFOR-
TUNATELY,
MY MOTHER
AND FATHER
HAD NO
SONS...
SO MY
SISTER
AND I ARE
THE ONLY
CHILDREN.
THE KUONJI
FAMILY NAME HAS
BEEN CARRIED BY
THE FEMALE LINE.
MY FATHER AND
GRANDFATHER
WERE ADOPTED
INTO THE FAMILY
WHEN THEY
MARRIED.

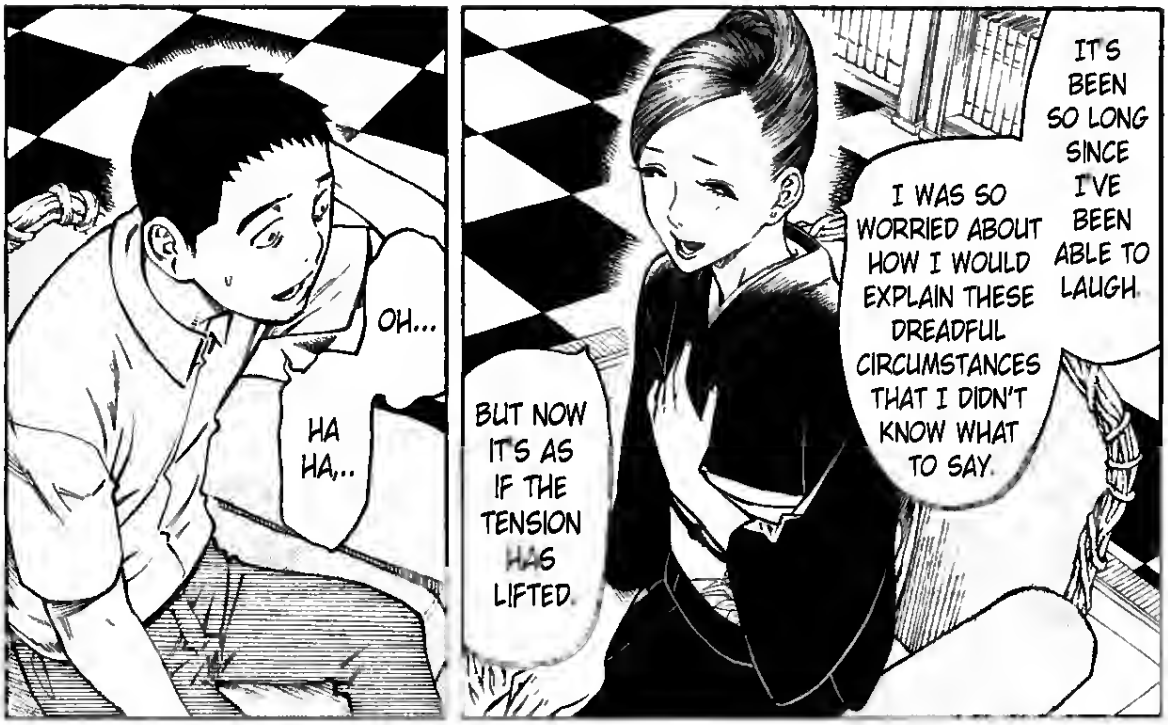
I'LL NEVER
BE ABLE
TO HAVE
CHILDREN OF
MY OWN.

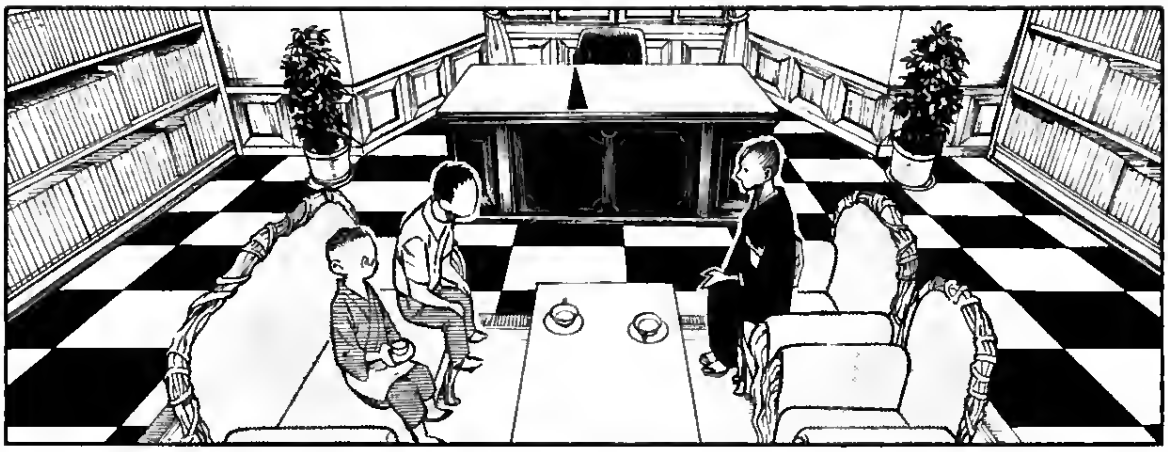

IT'S TERRIBLY
SHAMEFUL, BUT...
I'VE BEEN ILL
EVER SINCE I
WAS A CHILD, SO...

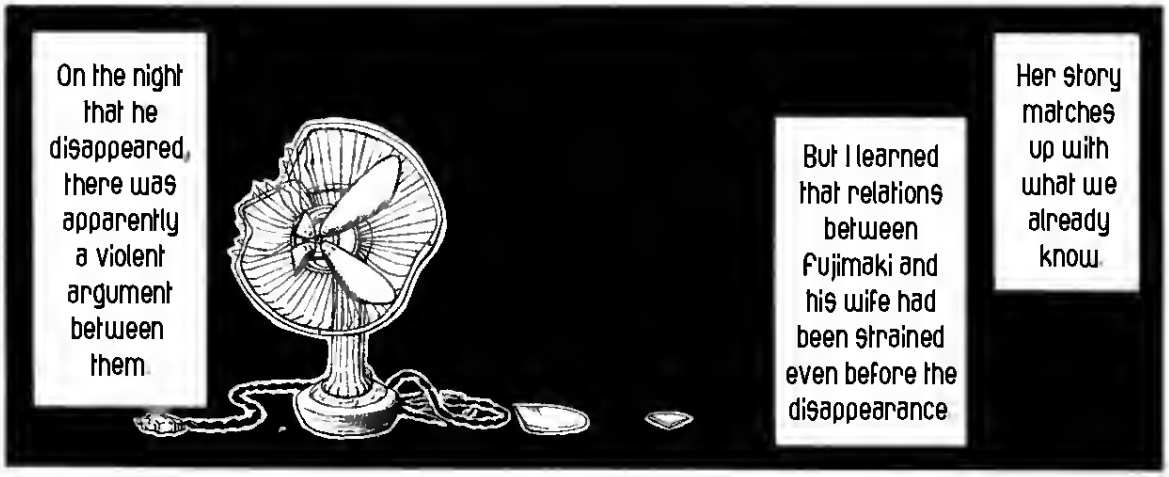
I'M
AFRAID
THAT...

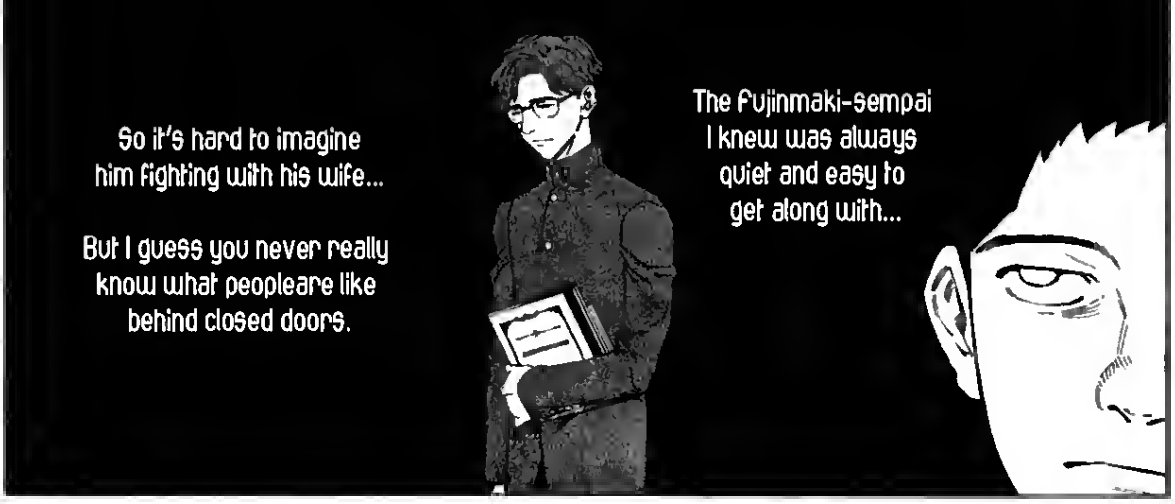
OH NO, NOT AT ALL.
AFTER ALL, I'M ALREADY 28 YEARS OLD...
YOU WOULDN'T EXPECT A WOMAN MY AGE TO BE UNMARRIED.
I-I'M SO SORRY...
YOU MUST THINK I'M TERRIBLY RUDE...
SO IT'S MY SISTER'S DUTY TO PRODUCE AN HEIR...
It's my fault that she was reminded of something so painful...
Why am I such an idiot!?
PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
N-NO, NO, I SHOULD BE THE ONE APOLOGIZING!!
OH...
I HOPE I HAVEN'T TROUBLED YOU.

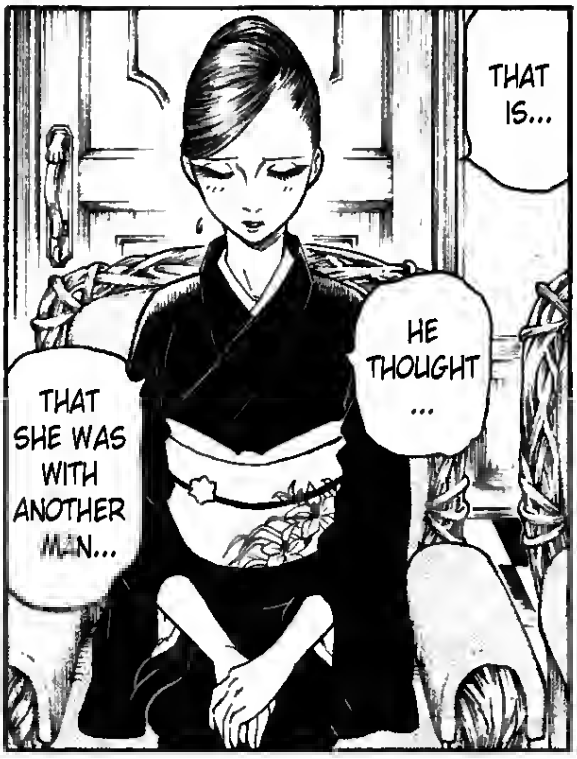
I MEAN ...
blush
OH MY GOD...
I NEVER WOULD HAVE GUESSED YOU WERE THAT OLD!
YOU LOOK LIKE A TEEN-AGER!
GASP
I'm so stupid, I'm so stupid!!
I'M SO SORRY!
OH MY, I KNOW I SHOULDN'T LAUGH... BUT YOU'RE A FUNNY MAN, SEKI-SAMA.
Fufu~


OH...
HA HA,..
BUT NOW IT'S AS IF THE TENSION HAS LIFTED.
I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT HOW I WOULD EXPLAIN THESE DREADFUL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO LAUGH.

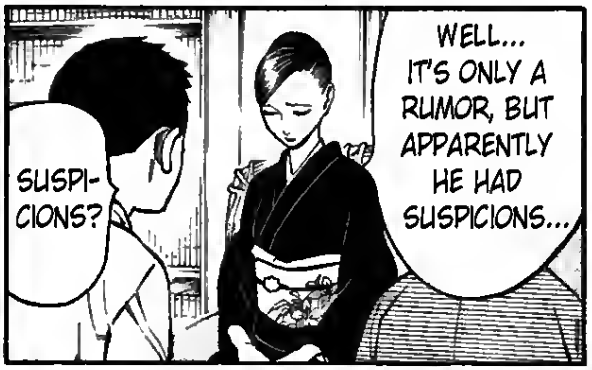


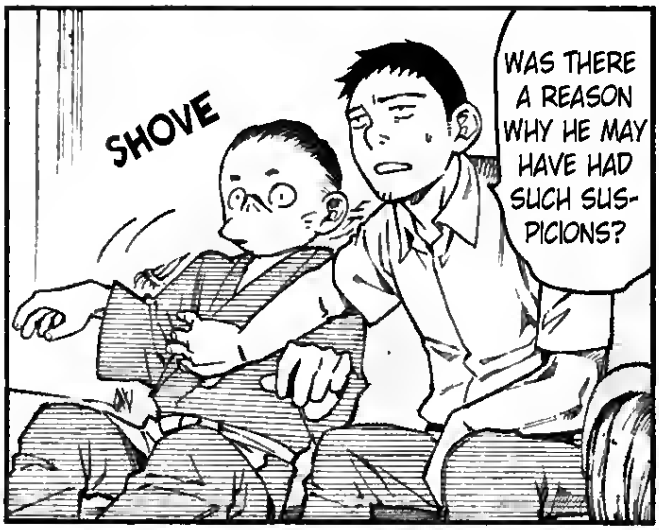

On the night that he disappeared, there was apparently a violent argument between them.
But I learned that relations between Fujimaki and his wife had been strained even before the disappearance.
Her story matches up with what we already know.

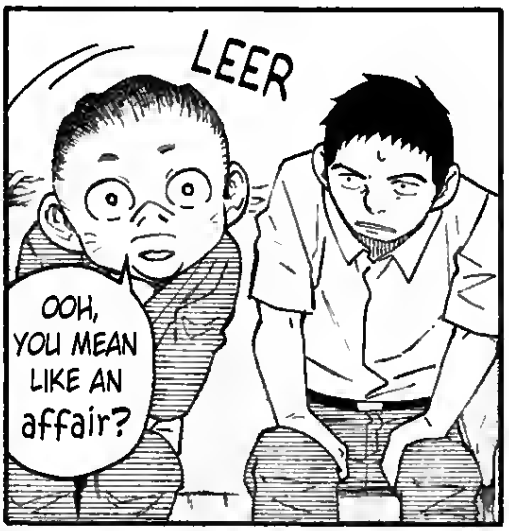

So it's hard to imagine him fighting with his wife...
But I guess you never really know what peopleare like behind closed doors.
The Fujinmaki-sempai I knew was always quiet and easy to get along with...


THAT IS...
HE THOUGHT ...
THAT SHE WAS WITH ANOTHER MAN...

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY WERE FIGHTING ABOUT?

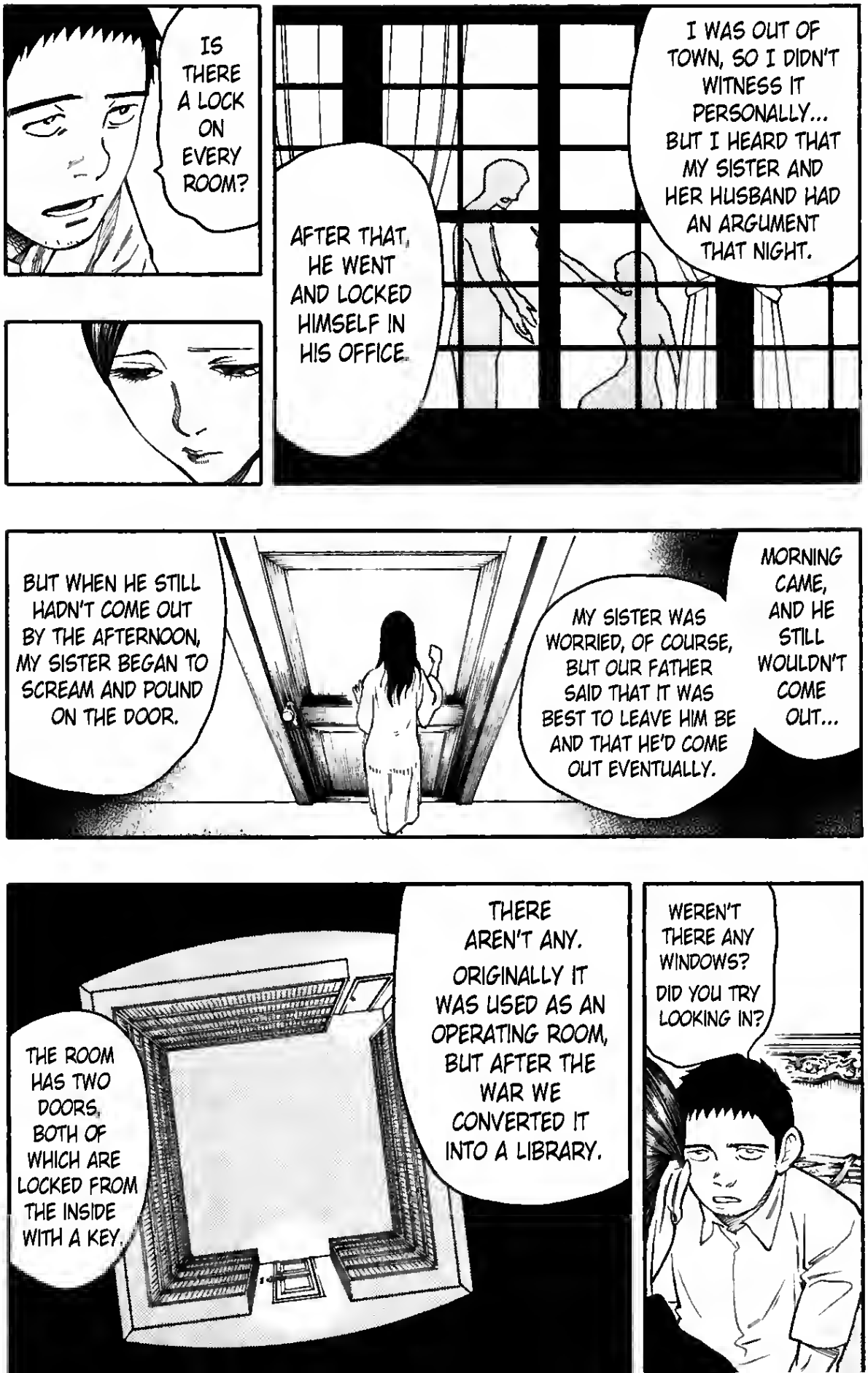

WELL... IT'S ONLY A RUMOR, BUT APPARENTLY HE HAD SUSPICIONS...
SUSPI-CIONS?


SHOVE
WAS THERE A REASON WHY HE MAY HAVE HAD SUCH SUS-PICIONS?


LEER
OOH, YOU MEAN LIKE AN affair?

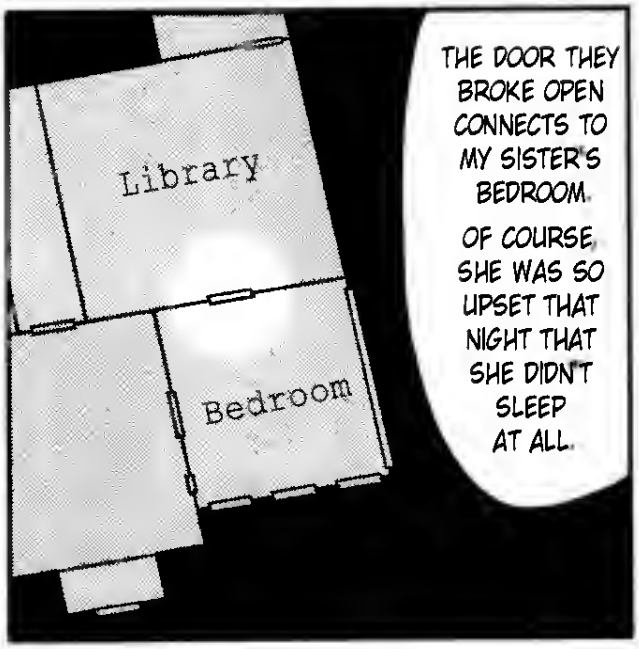
SO MAKIO HAD NO REASON TO SUSPECT HER...?
She's being evasive.
BUT I'M SURE THAT MY SISTER WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING...
FORGIVE ME FOR BEING SO FRANK.
MY MOTHER NOTICED HIS TALENT WHEN HE WAS YOUNG, SO AT ONE POINT HE WAS SUPPOSED TO MARRY MY SISTER AND TAKE THE KUONJI NAME....
HOWEVER... THERE'S ANOTHER DOCTOR AT OUR HOSPITAL... DR. NAITOU.
NONE!
AT LEAST NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF...
SO HE WANTED TO GET BACK AT MAKIO-SAN AND MAKE HIM SUFFER!
BUT THEN MAKIO-SAN SHOWS UP AND TAKES EVERYTHING AWAY FROM HIM!
DR. NAITOU BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD BE CHOSEN AS HEIR, BUT...

SO MAKIO SUSPECTED THAT YOUR SISTER WAS CARRYING ON AN AFFAIR WITH THIS DR. NAITOU?
OW!
SHOVE
INDEED. IF THEY'D BEEN DISCOVERED, HE CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE BEEN DISMISSED FROM THE CLINIC...
HOWEVER... THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NOTHING TO GAIN FROM A RELATIONSHIP WITH MY SISTER.
...YES. AND NAITOU CERTAINLY MADE NO SECRET OF HIS UNHAPPINESS WITH THE SITUATION.
SO, UH, ANYWAY, COULD YOU TELL US ANY MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE DAY THAT MAKIO DISAPPEARED?
YEAH, BUT...
THAT'S FOR SURE.
I FEEL BAD FOR YOUR SIS!
IT'S ALWAYS THE SERIOUS, NERDY TYPES WHO GO CRAZY WITH JEALOUSY, YOU KNOW?

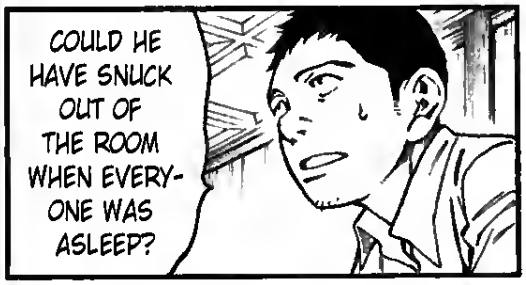

IS THERE A LOCK ON EVERY ROOM?
I WAS OUT OF TOWN, SO I DIDN'T WITNESS IT PERSONALLY... BUT I HEARD THAT MY SISTER AND HER HUSBAND HAD AN ARGUMENT THAT NIGHT.
AFTER THAT, HE WENT AND LOCKED HIMSELF IN HIS OFFICE.
MORNING CAME, AND HE STILL WOULDN'T COME OUT...
MY SISTER WAS WORRIED, OF COURSE, BUT OUR FATHER SAID THAT IT WAS BEST TO LEAVE HIM BE AND THAT HE'D COME OUT EVENTUALLY.
BUT WHEN HE STILL HADN'T COME OUT BY THE AFTERNOON, MY SISTER BEGAN TO SCREAM AND POUND ON THE DOOR.
WEREN'T THERE ANY WINDOWS? DID YOU TRY LOOKING IN?
THERE AREN'T ANY. ORIGINALLY IT WAS USED AS AN OPERATING ROOM, BUT AFTER THE WAR WE CONVERTED IT INTO A LIBRARY.
THE ROOM HAS TWO DOORS, BOTH OF WHICH ARE LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE WITH A KEY.

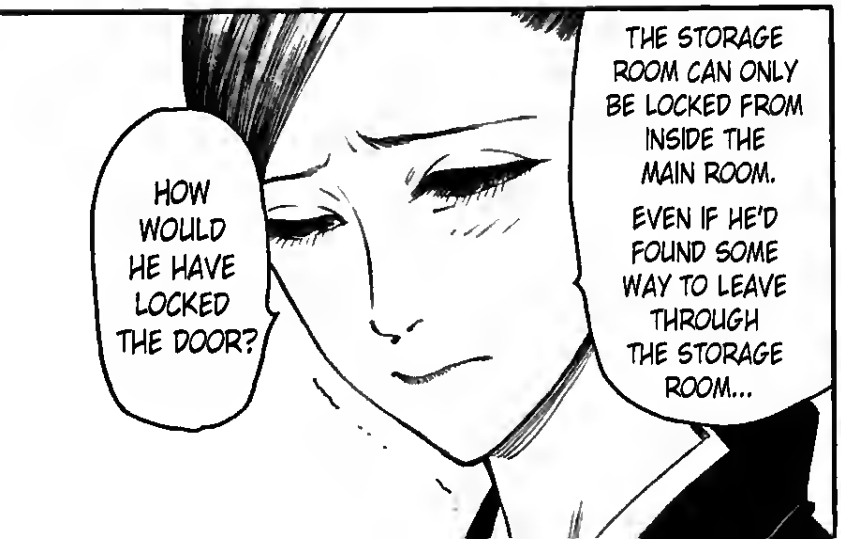
SO NAITOU AND ONE OF THE WORKERS TOOK THE DOOR OFF ITS HINGES AND BROKE INTO THE ROOM.
SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT HE MIGHT HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE BY HANGING... AND MY SISTER COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.

SO WHAT DID YOUR SISTER DO NEXT?

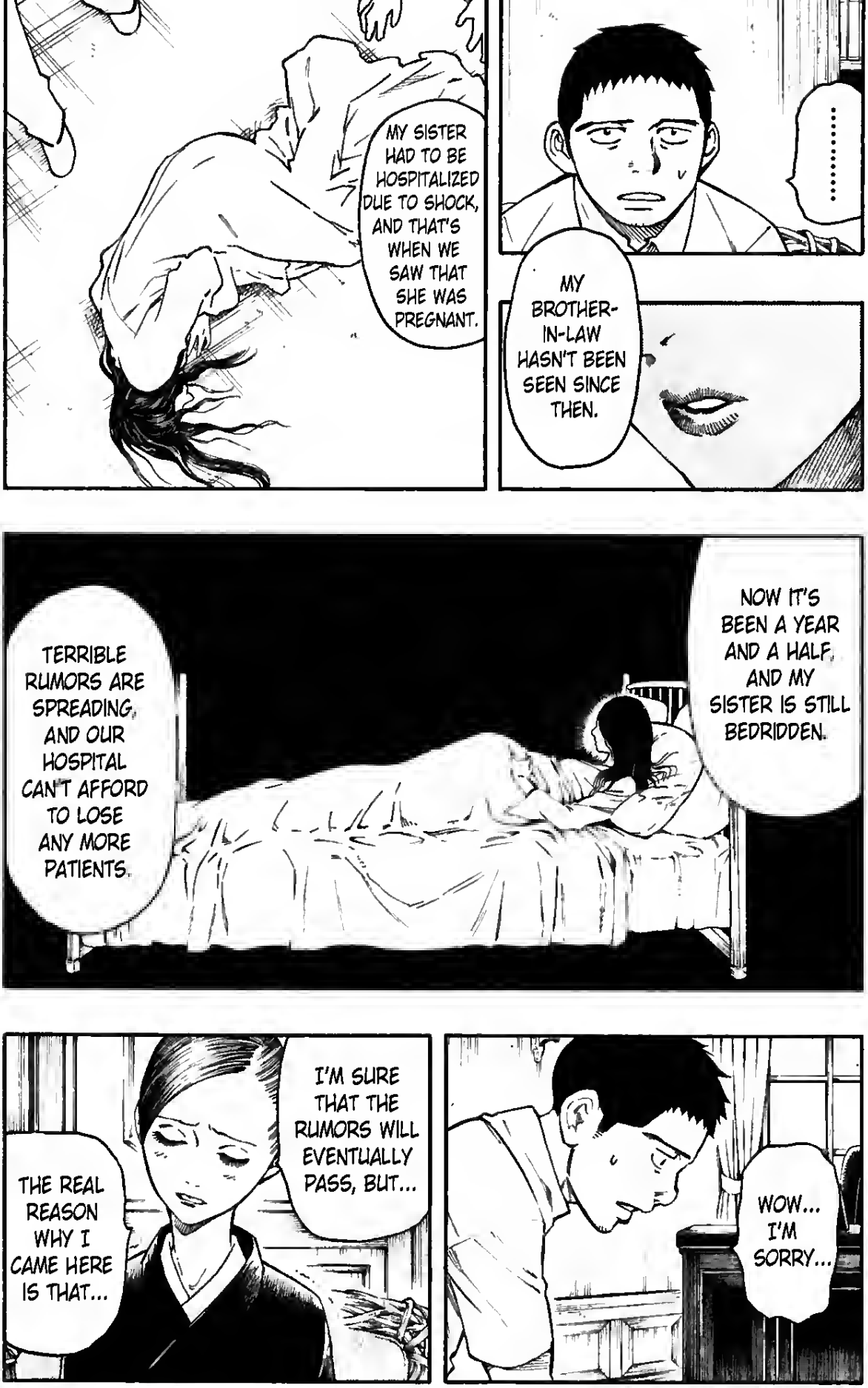

Library
Bedroom
THE DOOR THEY BROKE OPEN CONNECTS TO MY SISTER'S BEDROOM.
OF COURSE, SHE WAS SO UPSET THAT NIGHT THAT SHE DIDN'T SLEEP AT ALL.

HE WAS GONE.
AND HE WASN'T THERE?

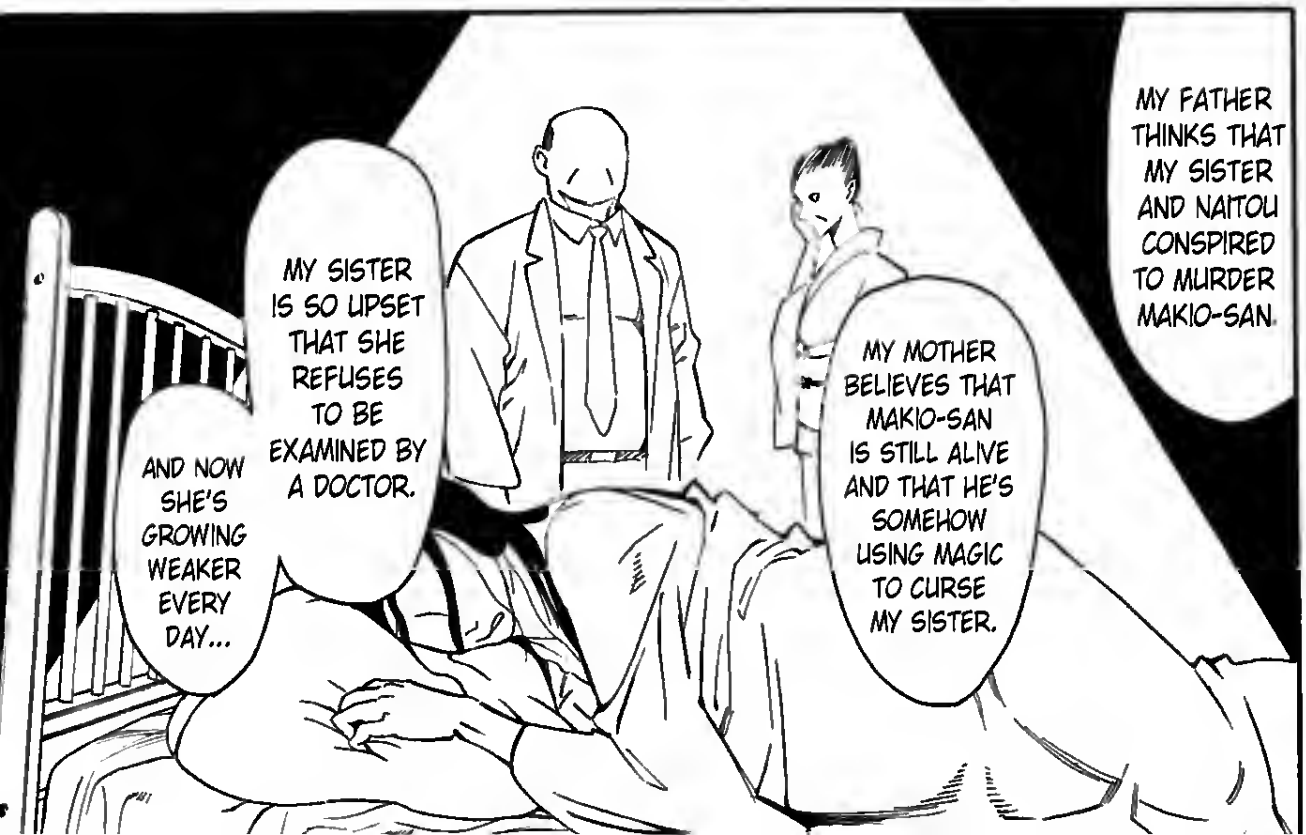

COULD HE HAVE SNUCK OUT OF THE ROOM WHEN EVERY-ONE WAS ASLEEP?

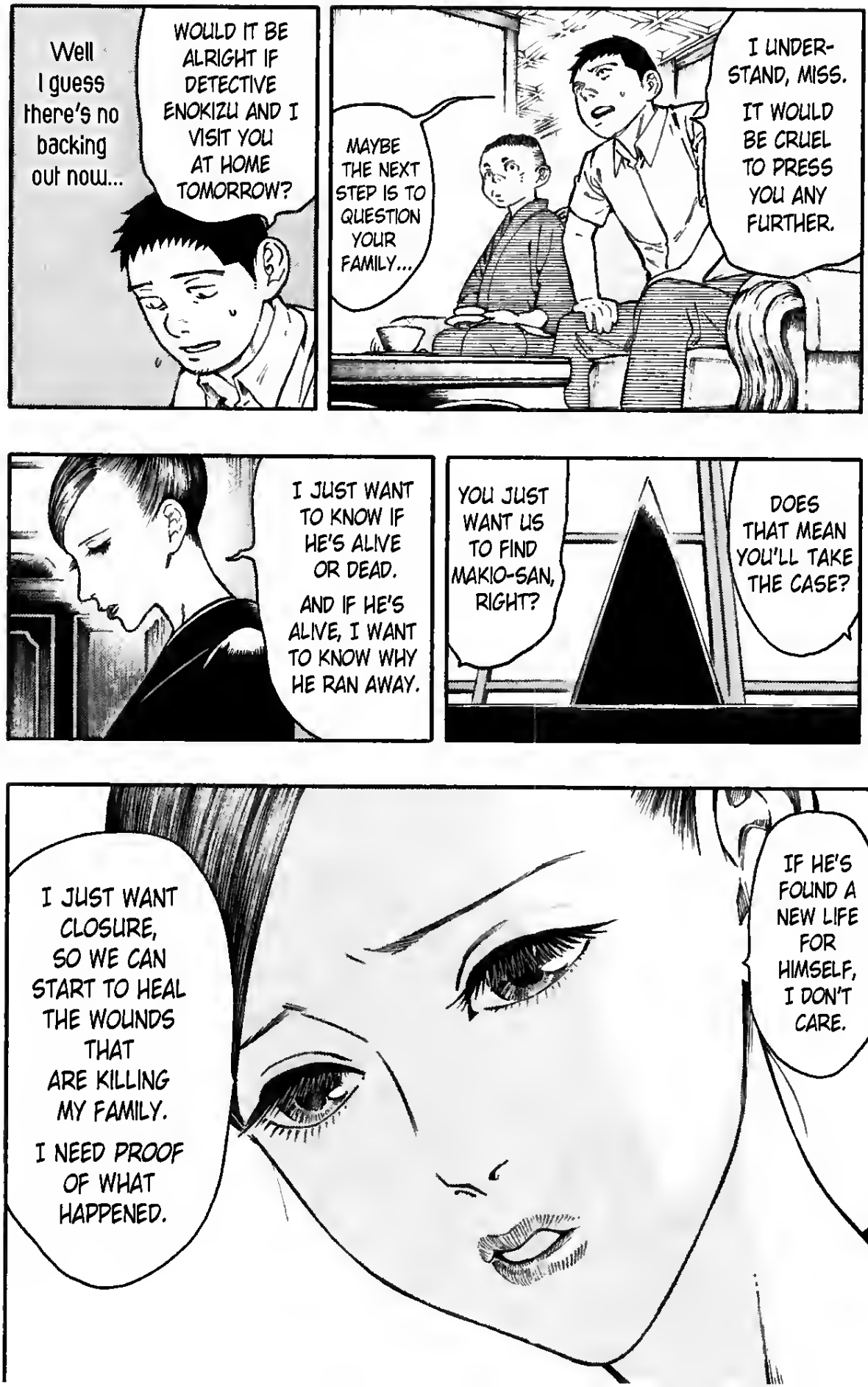

HOW WOULD HE HAVE LOCKED THE DOOR?
THE STORAGE ROOM CAN ONLY BE LOCKED FROM INSIDE THE MAIN ROOM.
EVEN IF HE'D FOUND SOME WAY TO LEAVE THROUGH THE STORAGE ROOM...

IT CONNECTS TO A SMALL, WINDOW-LESS STORAGE ROOM.
AND THERE'S NO WAY THAT HE COULD HAVE LEFT THROUGH THE OTHER DOOR.

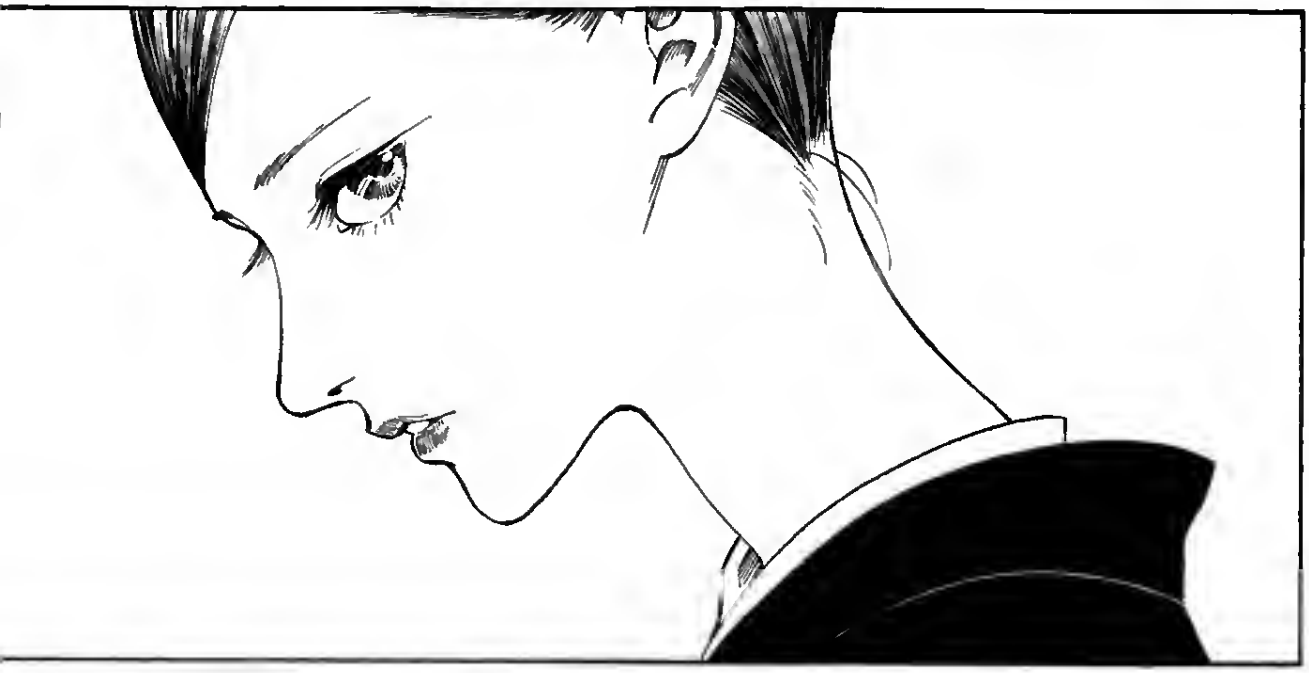

MY SISTER HAD TO BE HOSPITALIZED DUE TO SHOCK, AND THAT'S WHEN WE SAW THAT SHE WAS PREGNANT.
.....
MY BROTHER-IN-LAW HASN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE THEN.
NOW IT'S BEEN A YEAR AND A HALF, AND MY SISTER IS STILL BEDRIDDEN.
TERRIBLE RUMORS ARE SPREADING, AND OUR HOSPITAL CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE ANY MORE PATIENTS.
I'M SURE THAT THE RUMORS WILL EVENTUALLY PASS, BUT...
THE REAL REASON WHY I CAME HERE IS THAT...
WOW... I'M SORRY...

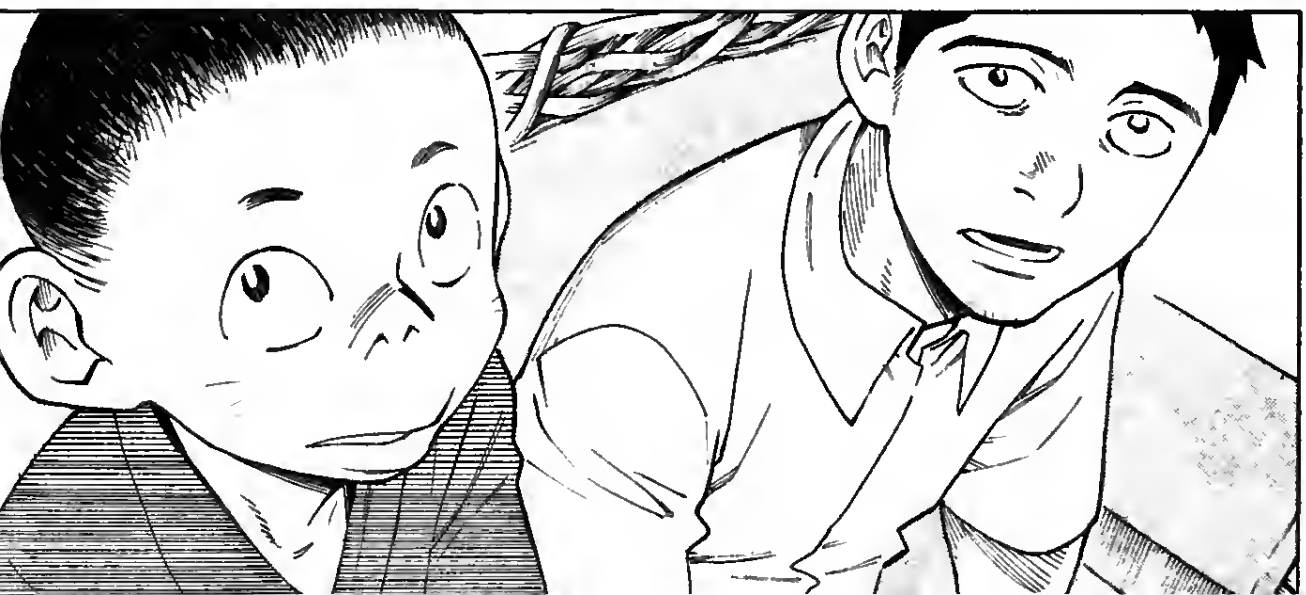
THE KUONJI FAMILY..
NO, MY FAMILY... MY FAMILY IS BREAKING APART!
AS LONG AS OUR FAMILY IS STRONG, WE CAN ENDURE ANY HARDSHIP.
BUT NOW WE'VE ALL STARTED TO DOUBT EACH OTHER... AND I'M AFRAID.
...WHAT KIND OF DOUBTS?


MY FATHER THINKS THAT MY SISTER AND NAITOU CONSPIRED TO MURDER MAKIO-SAN.
MY MOTHER BELIEVES THAT MAKIO-SAN IS STILL ALIVE AND THAT HE'S SOMEHOW USING MAGIC TO CURSE MY SISTER.
MY SISTER IS SO UPSET THAT SHE REFUSES TO BE EXAMINED BY A DOCTOR.
AND NOW SHE'S GROWING WEAKER EVERY DAY...

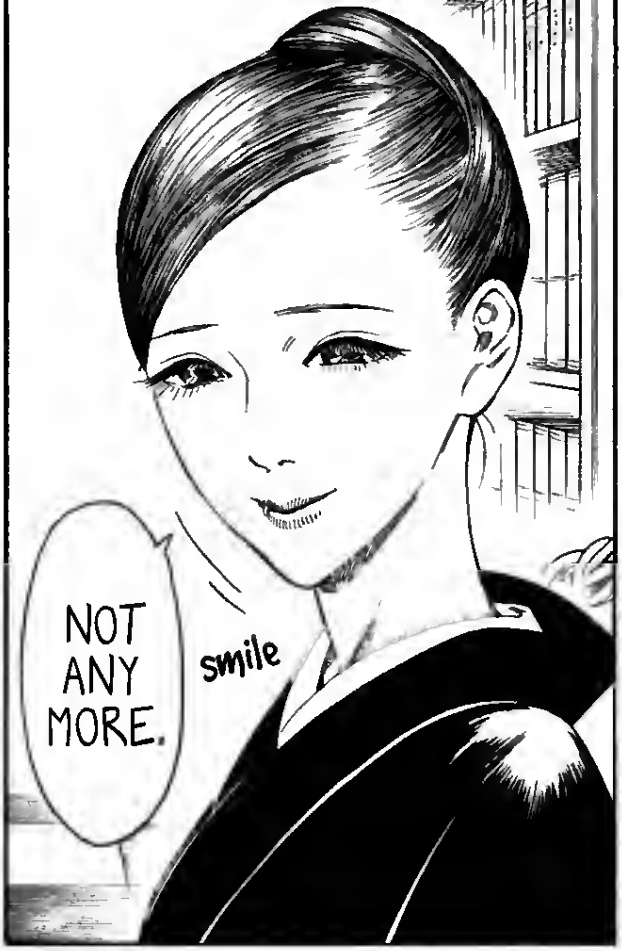

Well I guess there's no backing out now...
WOULD IT BE ALRIGHT IF DETECTIVE ENOKIZU AND I VISIT YOU AT HOME TOMORROW?
MAYBE THE NEXT STEP IS TO QUESTION YOUR FAMILY...
I UNDERSTAND, MISS. IT WOULD BE CRUEL TO PRESS YOU ANY FURTHER.
I JUST WANT TO KNOW IF HE'S ALIVE OR DEAD. AND IF HE'S ALIVE, I WANT TO KNOW WHY HE RAN AWAY.
YOU JUST WANT US TO FIND MAKIO-SAN, RIGHT?
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL TAKE THE CASE?
I JUST WANT CLOSURE, SO WE CAN START TO HEAL THE WOUNDS THAT ARE KILLING MY FAMILY. I NEED PROOF OF WHAT HAPPENED.
IF HE'S FOUND A NEW LIFE FOR HIMSELF, I DON'T CARE.

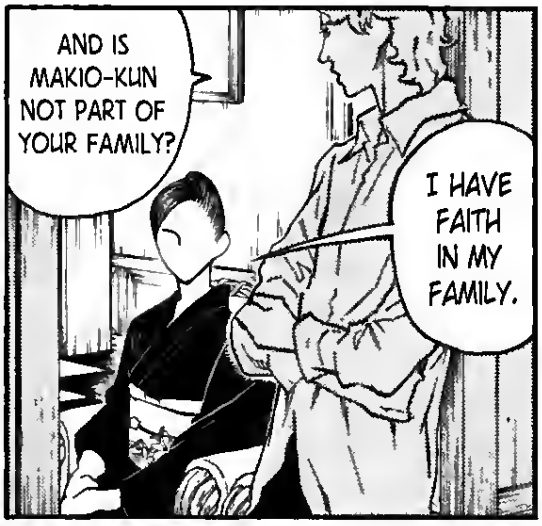
WOULD YOU STILL WANT THAT PROOF EVEN IF IT DESTROYED YOUR FAMILY?

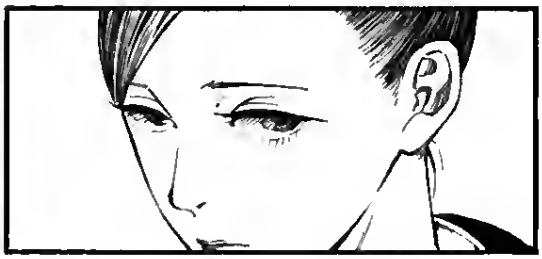


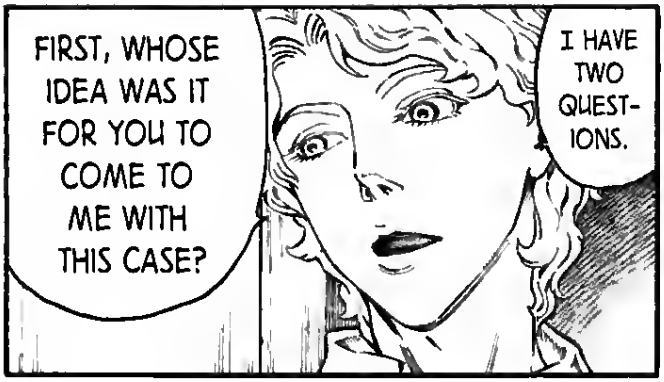


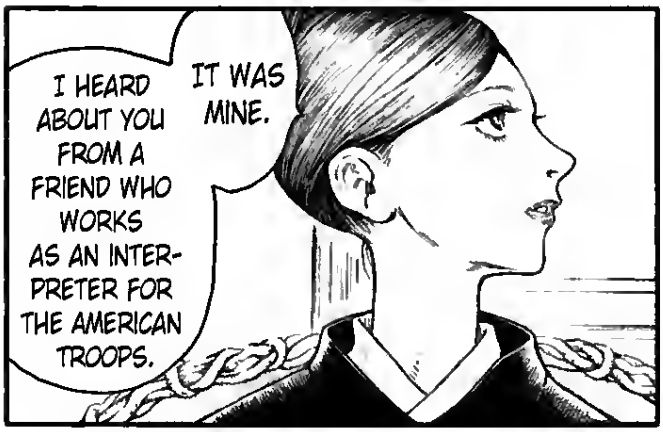
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
HM?
I MEANT EXACTLY WHAT I SAID.


NOT ANY MORE.
smile


AND IS MAKIO-KUN NOT PART OF YOUR FAMILY?
I HAVE FAITH IN MY FAMILY.




FIRST, WHOSE IDEA WAS IT FOR YOU TO COME TO ME WITH THIS CASE?
I HAVE TWO QUEST-IONS.

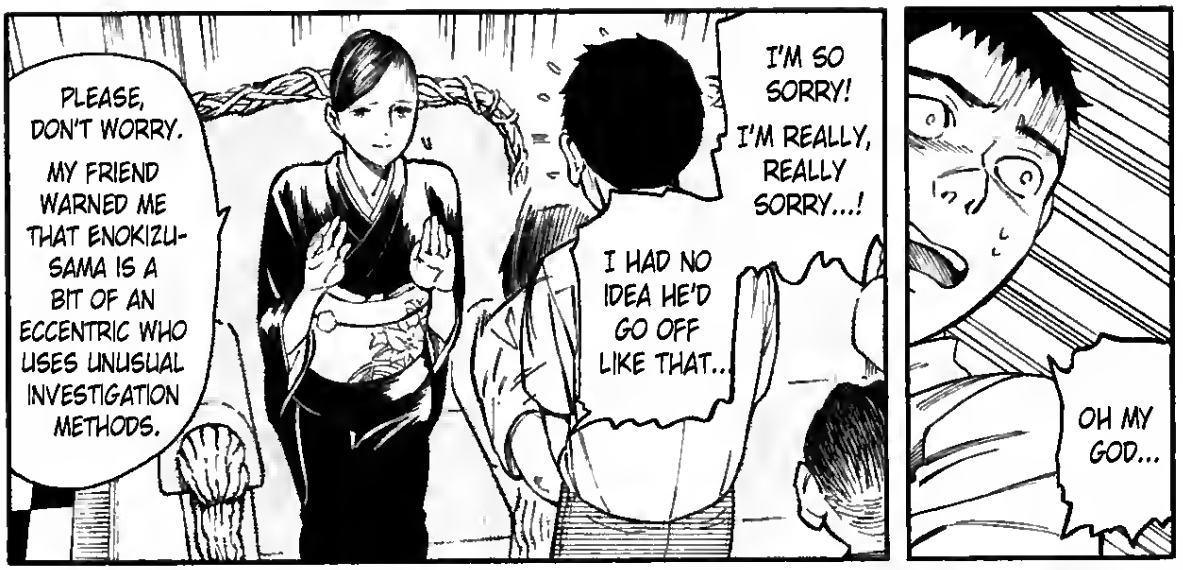

I HEARD ABOUT YOU FROM A FRIEND WHO WORKS AS AN INTER-PRETER FOR THE AMERICAN TROOPS.
IT WAS MINE.

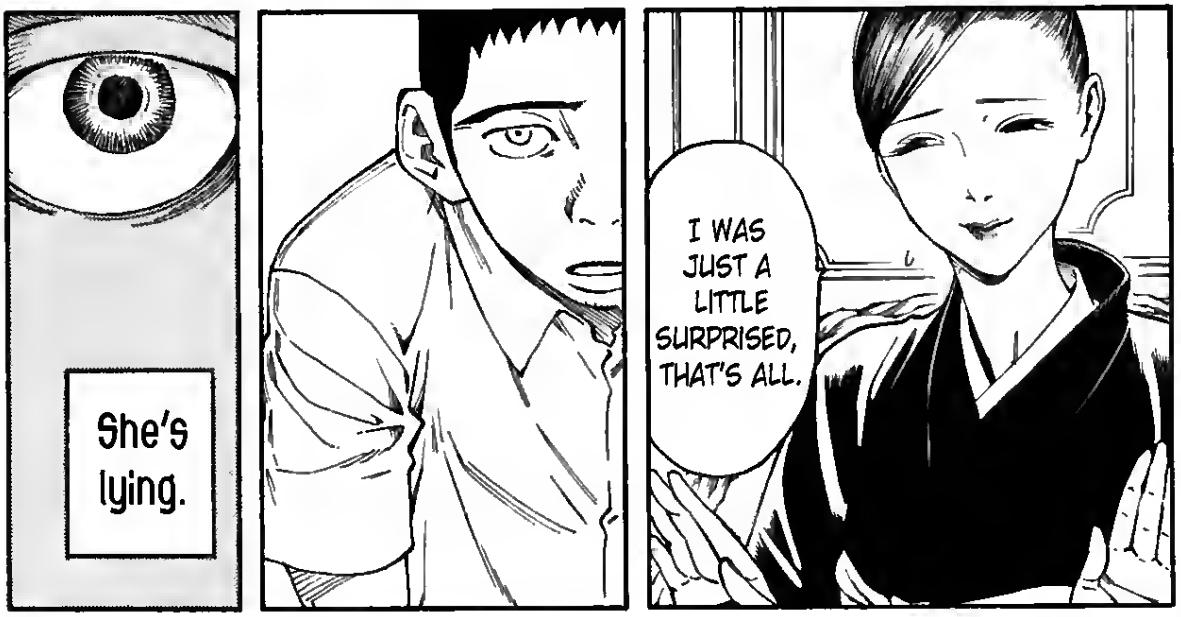
WHAT THE HELL, ENO-SAN!?
YOU CAN'T TALK LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF THE CLIENT!

ENO-SAN, THAT'S ENOUGH!!
HAVE YOU BEEN LYING?
HM.
ONE MORE THING, THEN.
IT'S THE SAME THING, RIGHT, KUONJI-SAN...?
THAT'S THE SAME THING!
HUH ...?
THIS WOMAN CAME TO US FOR HELP!
WHY WOULD SHE LIE!?
SEKI-KUN, SHE NEVER ASKED US TO SOLVE ANYTHING.
SHE ONLY SAID THAT SHE WANTED PROOF.

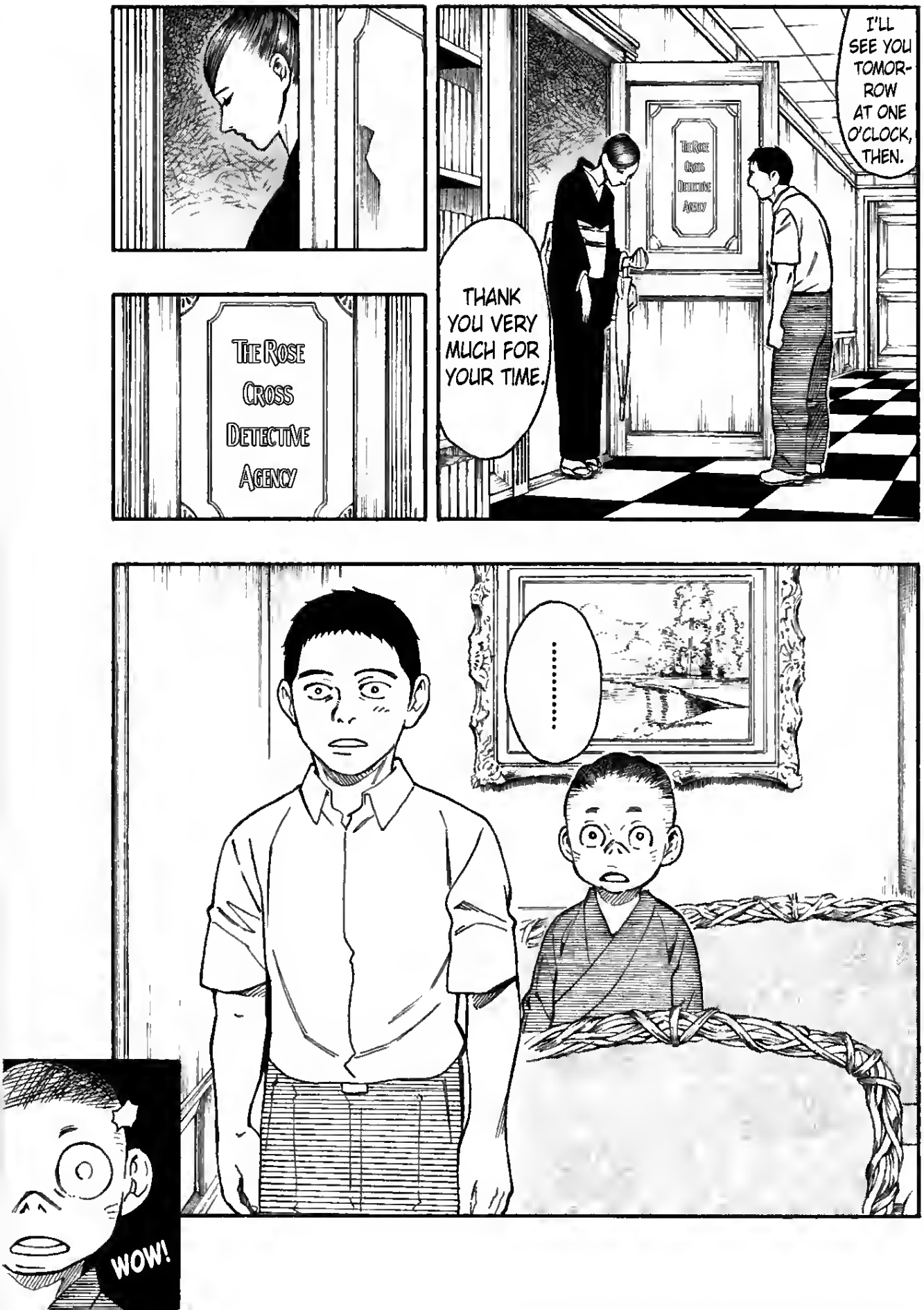
HAVE I SAID SOMETHING TO MAKE YOU DOUBT ME?
NO.
BUT I CAN SEE THAT YOU'VE MET THIS MAN BEFORE.

ENO-SAN, ARE YOU INSANE!?
I SWEAR, I'VE NEVER MET THIS WOMAN BEFORE!
OR ARE YOU ACCUSING ME TOO!?
YOU'RE JUST THE FORGETFUL TYPE.
WELL, MISS? YOU KNOW SEKI-KUN, DON'T YOU?
I'M SORRY, BUT YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN.
I'VE NEVER MET THIS MAN IN MY LIFE.
SLAM
WHO KNOWS...
WELL, WHAT-EVER.


PLEASE, DON'T WORRY.
MY FRIEND WARNED ME THAT ENOKIZU-SAMA IS A BIT OF AN ECCENTRIC WHO USES UNUSUAL INVESTIGATION METHODS.
I'M SO SORRY!
I'M REALLY, REALLY SORRY...!
I HAD NO IDEA HE'D GO OFF LIKE THAT..
OH MY GOD...

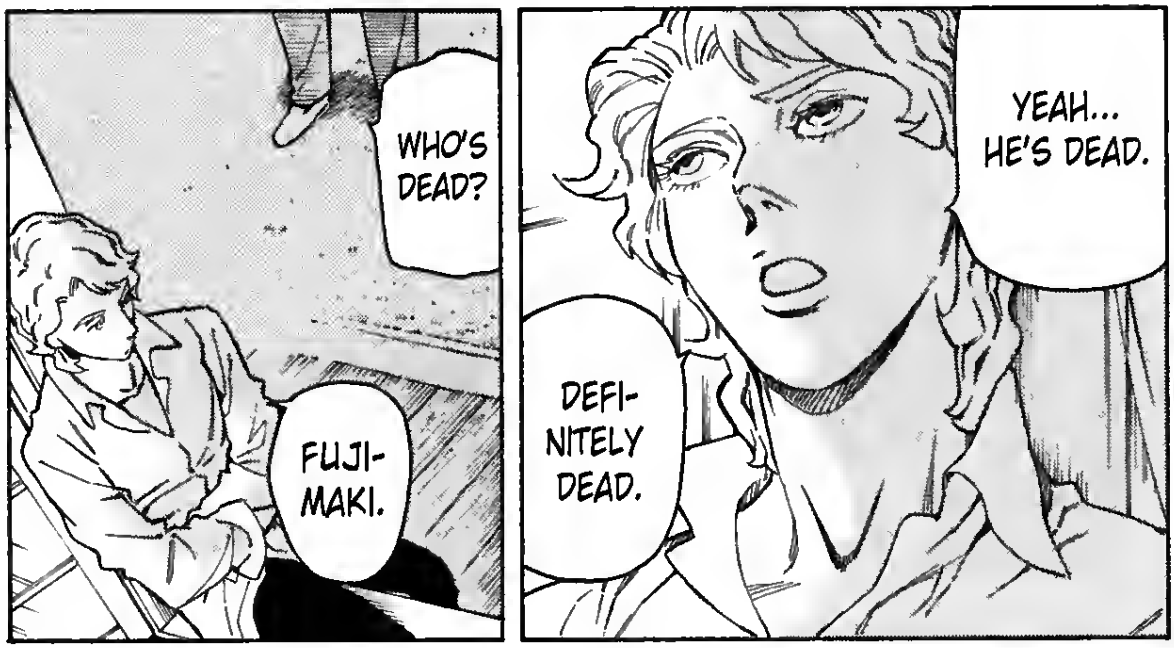


There's no way anyone could stay this calm.

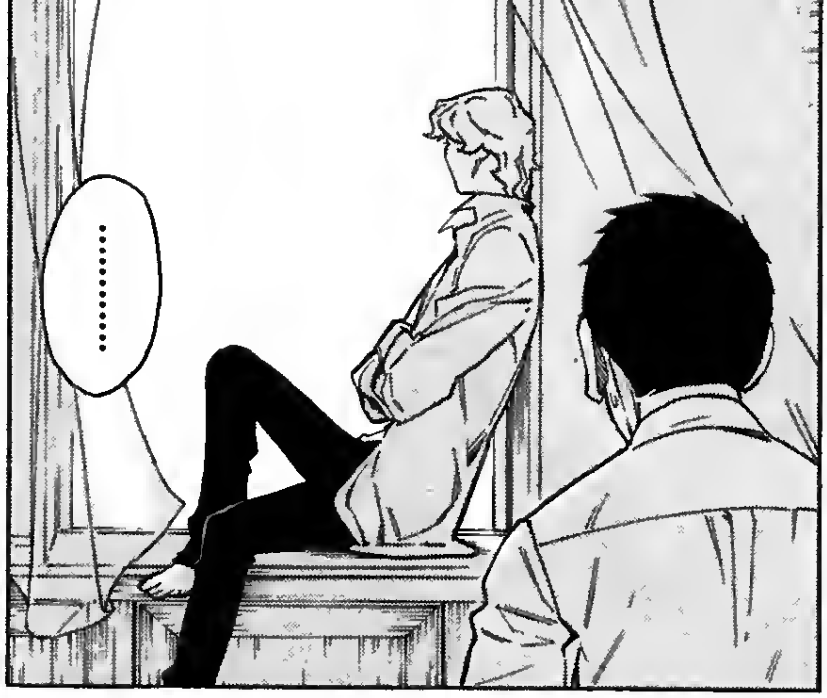

THE ROSE CROSS DETECTIVE AGENCY
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.
THE ROSE CROSS DETECTIVE AGENCY
I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW AT ONE O'CLOCK, THEN.
.....
WOW!

But damn, that lady was as glamourous as a movie star!
She was all wrapped up in a kimono, but she wasn't even sweaty!
And I guess your wife's not too bad, either.
Wow, I've never seen such a beautiful woman in my life!
And I've seen some gorgeous gals, you know?
Even the old bookseller's wife is a hottie.
No...
I just can't bring myself to have such crude thoughts about her.
Oh come on, you know you'd hit that!
HUH, I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT...
BUT YOU'RE STILL A PERVERT!
ENO-SAN ...?
CREAK
BANG
BANG
ENO-SAN, WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED OUT THERE!?
YOU'D BETTER HAVE A DAMNED GOOD EXPLAN-ATION!
WHERE IS THAT USELESS DETECTIVE?

...YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER THAT WOMAN, DO YOU?
HUH?
ACTUAL DETECTIVE WORK!
SO DON'T BE RUDE.
WHAT ARE WE DOING TOMOR-ROW?
.....?
COULD YOU TRY TO BEHAVE YOURSELF TOMORROW?

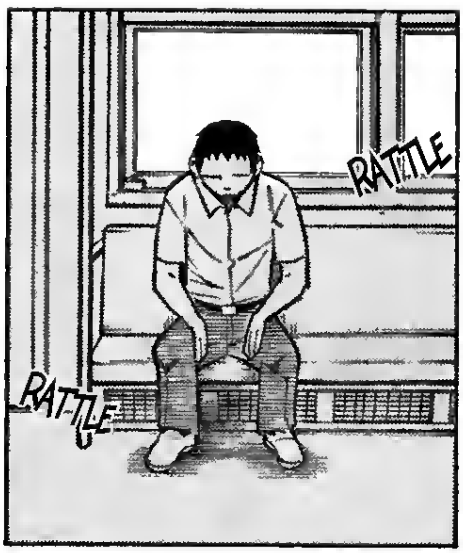

WHO'S DEAD?
FUJI-MAKI.
YEAH... HE'S DEAD.
DEFI-NITELY DEAD.

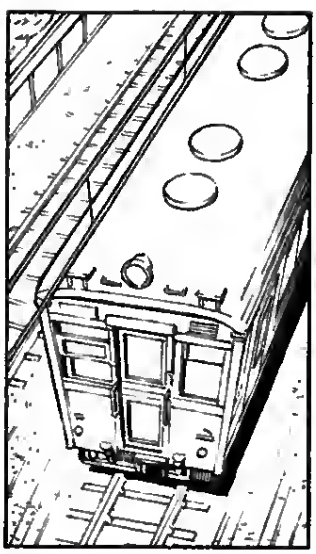
THERE'S NO WAY THAT SHE WAS LYING!
I'M SURE OF IT!
WHY ARE YOU SO SUSPICIOUS OF HER!?
AND THAT WOMAN KNOWS IT.

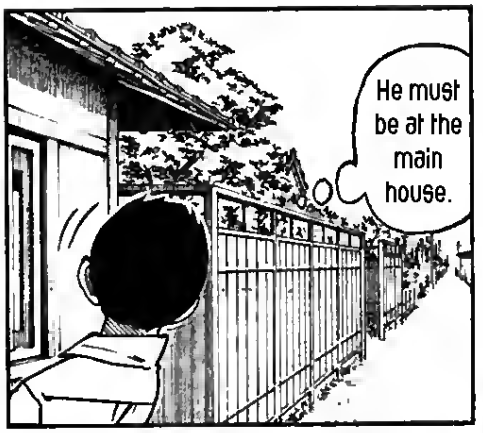


NOTE

The sign says "Kyougokudou."

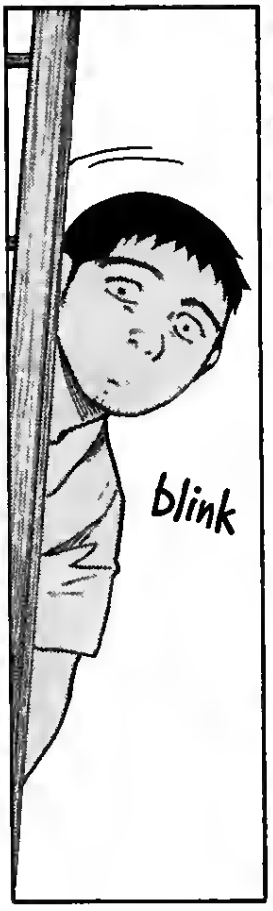





He must be at the main house.

OI, KYOU-GOKU-DOU..
IS THE SHOP OPEN?

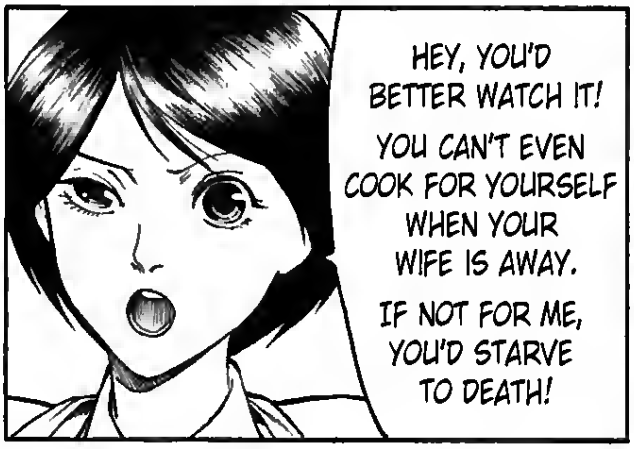
CREAK

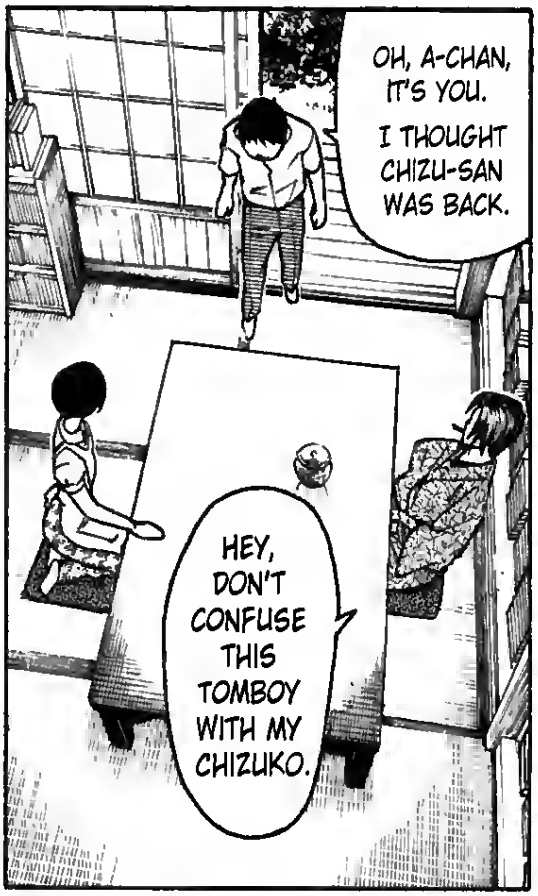

blink

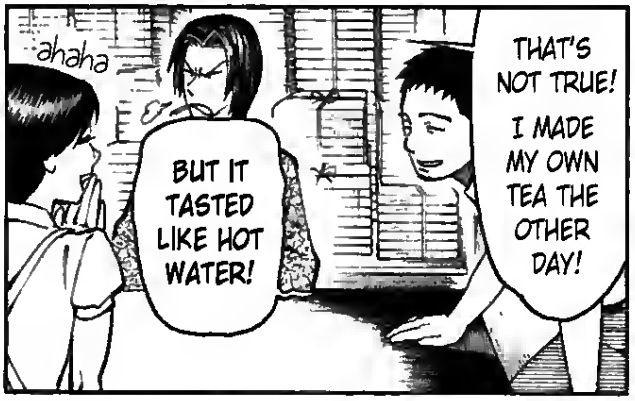
THAT'S WHY I'M SAYING THAT...
!!!

I guess Chizu-san is back from her trip?

Oh, Sekiguchi-sensei!


HEY, YOU'D BETTER WATCH IT!
YOU CAN'T EVEN COOK FOR YOURSELF WHEN YOUR WIFE IS AWAY.
IF NOT FOR ME, YOU'D STARVE TO DEATH!


OH, A-CHAN, IT'S YOU.
I THOUGHT CHIZU-SAN WAS BACK.
HEY, DON'T CONFUSE THIS TOMBOY WITH MY CHIZUKO.


ahaha
BUT IT TASTED LIKE HOT WATER!
THAT'S NOT TRUE!
I MADE MY OWN TEA THE OTHER DAY!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEVOTED TO YOUR BOOKS!
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF! YUKIE-SAN IS GOING TO DUMP YOUR PATHETIC ASS.
SPEAKING OF YOUR WIFE, WHERE IS CHIZUKO-SAN?
DID SHE FINALLY DIVORCE YOU?
ANYWAY, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT I'M VERY DEVOTED TO MY WIFE.
OH!
SHE'S VISITING HER PARENTS IN KYOTO TO HELP PREPARE FOR THE GION FESTIVAL.
EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD MAKES A FLOAT FOR THE PARADE, SO THEY NEED SOME EXTRA HELP.
I guess she meant the Gion Festival.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, SHE MUST HAVE GONE TO THAT FESTIVAL AFTER ALL.
OH, UH...
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU RAN ALL THE WAY UP THE HILL.
ANYWAY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALL OF A SUDDEN?

NOTE The Gion Festival is one of Japan's most famous traditional events. It takes place in Kyoto throughout the entire month of July, and features massive floats and portable shrines that are carried around by teams of local men.

ABOUT THE KUONJI CLINIC CASE?
gulp
I DID AS YOU SUGGESTED AND PAID A VISIT TO OUR DETECTIVE FRIEND.
UM, WELL...
Oh crap, I forgot...
WELL, IT'S A LONG STORY...
WHERE SHOULD I BEGIN...
SO? WHAT DID OUR ECCENTRIC FRIEND HAVE TO SAY?
DON'T WORRY, I EXPLAINED THE SITUATION TO HER.

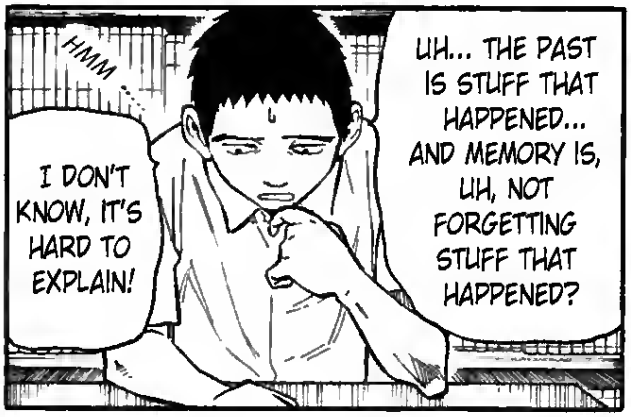
THAT RYOUKO-SAN IS REALLY SOME-THING...
HER SKIN WAS AS DELICATE AS A ROSE PETAL...
ah
AND SO,
WE'RE GOING TO VISIT THE KUONJI CLINIC AT 1 O'CLOCK TOMORROW AFTERNOON.
YOU SOUND LIKE A LOVESICK SCHOOLBOY, YOU KNOW?
I-IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL!
WELL, MAYBE YOU'RE NOT THAT FAR GONE YET...
BUT WHEN YOU GOT TO THE TOPIC OF KUONJI RYOUKO, YOU STARTED TALKING IN BAD POETRY.
OH, DON'T BE SUCH A SOURPUSS!
SEKIGUCHI-SENSEI IS A WRITER, SO IT'S NATURAL FOR BEAUTY TO INSPIRE HIM TO WRITE POETRY!
RIGHT, SENSEI?
IT'S EMBAR-RASSING!
UM...

...HE SAID THAT FUJIMAKI WAS DEAD.
AND HE SAID THAT I'D MET KUONJI RYOUKO BEFORE.
OH, FORGET ABOUT IT.
DID ENOKIZU SAY ANYTHING ELSE?
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SO I GUESS SHE MUST HAVE SEEN FUJIMAKI'S CORPSE, OR AT LEAST SHE SAW WHAT APPEARED TO BE HIS CORPSE.
BUT IF SHE'S TELLING THE TRUTH, THEN SHE'S SOMEHOW FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIM... AND ABOUT YOU.
IT'S CERTAINLY POSSIBLE THAT SHE MET YOU IN PASSING AND SIMPLY FORGOT ABOUT IT.
PERHAPS SHE ONLY SAW SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE A CORPSE, OR SOMETHING THAT SHE DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE WAS A CORPSE.
BUT HOW COULD YOU OR ENOKIZU POSSIBLY KNOW WHAT SHE SAW!?
DON'T GET SO WORKED UP.

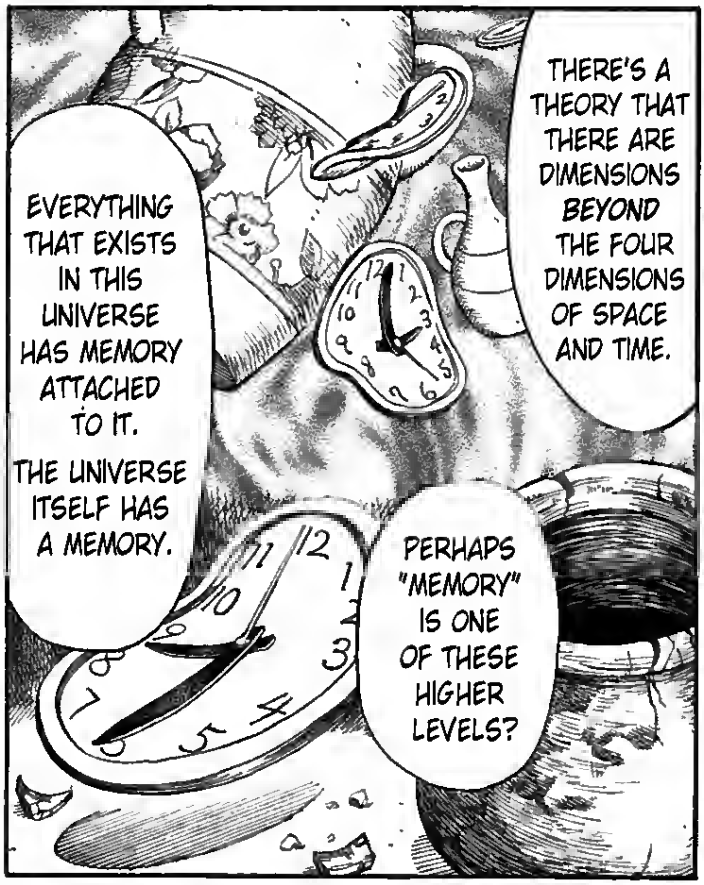
Have I really fallen in love with Kuonji Ryouko?
No, it's not like that...
I'm getting way too worked up over this woman...
BUT HOW COULD ENOKIZU KNOW SOMETHING THAT NEITHER I NOR MISS KUONJI CAN REMEMBER!?

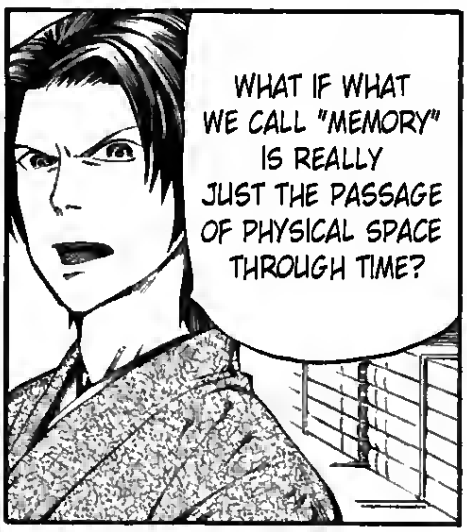
My feelings for her are pure...

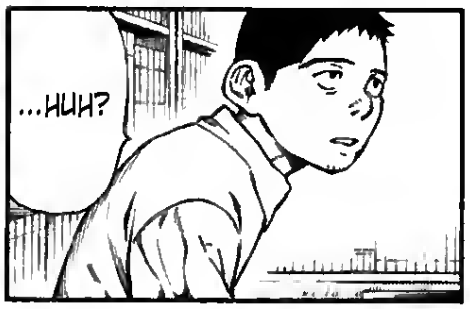
WHAT THE...
BUT HOW CAN THAT BE?


HMMM
I DON'T KNOW, IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN!
UH... THE PAST IS STUFF THAT HAPPENED... AND MEMORY IS, UH, NOT FORGETTING STUFF THAT HAPPENED?

SEKIGUCHI-KUN, CAN YOU TELL ME THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "MEMORY" AND "THE PAST?"
IT'S TRUE.

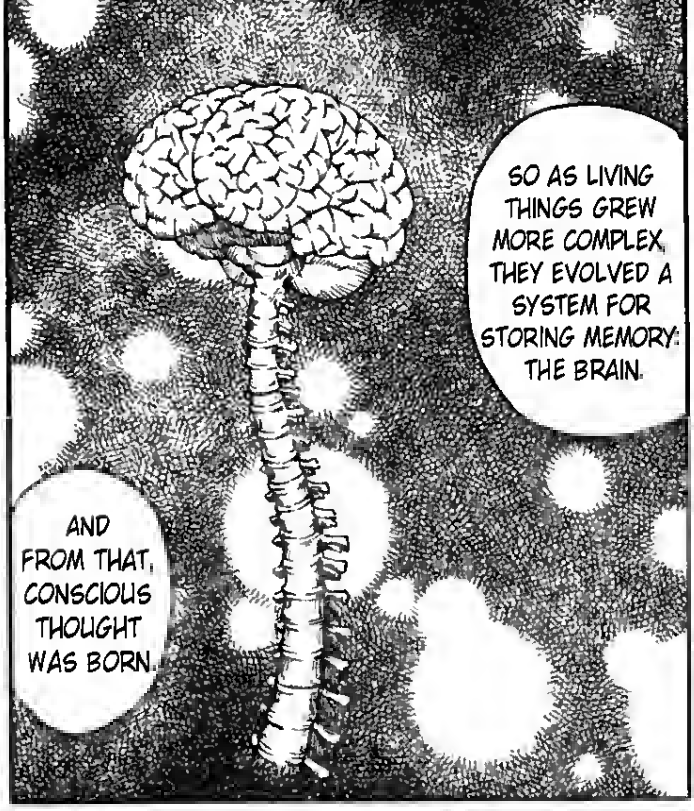

EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS IN THIS UNIVERSE HAS MEMORY ATTACHED TO IT.
THE UNIVERSE ITSELF HAS A MEMORY.
THERE'S A THEORY THAT THERE ARE DIMENSIONS *BEYOND* THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF SPACE AND TIME.
PERHAPS "MEMORY" IS ONE OF THESE HIGHER LEVELS?


WHAT IF WHAT WE CALL "MEMORY" IS REALLY JUST THE PASSAGE OF PHYSICAL SPACE THROUGH TIME?

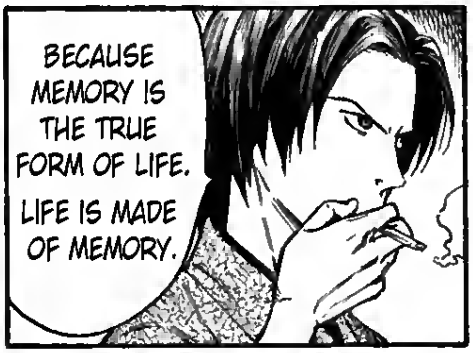

...HUH?

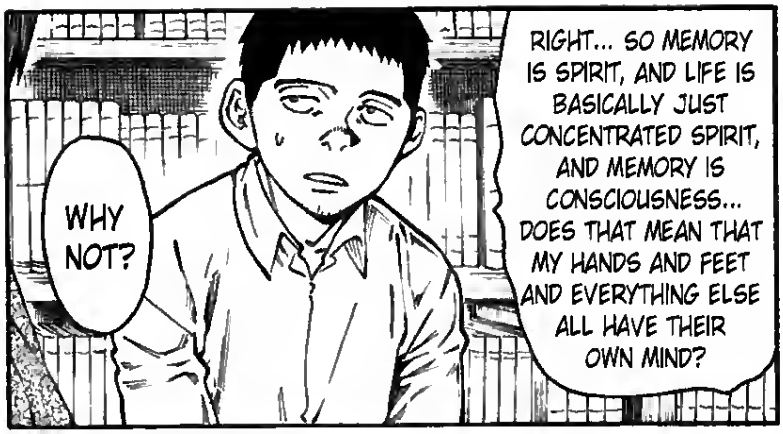
INCIDENTALLY, CAN YOU TELL ME THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIVING THINGS AND INANIMATE OBJECTS?
WELL, MAYBE.
WHAT IF THAT TRAIL OF MEMORY IS WHAT WE THINK OF AS A "SPIRIT?"
OI, KYOU-GOKUDOU!
ARE YOU SAYING THAT EVERY ROCK AND EVERY PIECE OF GRASS IN THE UNIVERSE HAS A MEMORY...?
WELL, EVERYTHING IS MADE OUT OF THE SAME ATOMS...
BUT AT SOME POINT THERE'S A TRANSITION BETWEEN LIFELESS AMINO ACIDS AND A LIVING CELL.
SO "LIFE" IS WHATEVER FACTOR SEPARATES THEM, RIGHT?
UH... ONE'S ALIVE AND ONE'S NOT?
LIFE IS THE COALES-CENCE OF SPIRIT.
BUT THAT'S AN INHERENTLY UNSTABLE ARRANGEMENT - LIVING THINGS CAN'T LIVE FOREVER.
SO THIS "ACTIVE MEMORY" NEEDS A WAY TO SURVIVE AND CREATE COPIES OF ITSELF.
HM...
BUT WHAT IS "LIFE?"
WHAT IF WHAT WE CALL "LIFE" IS REALLY JUST MEMORY, OR SPIRIT, IN ITS ACTIVE FORM?

NOTE What Kyougoku is saying sounds pretty tripping, but it's actually what's known in theoretical neuroscience as the concept of "panpsychism" or "integrated information theory." According to panpsychism, "consciousness" naturally arises out of complex, organized information. So, any organized collection of molecules has some degree of "consciousness." It sounds pretty weird, but we actually don't have a *better* explanation for how consciousness works.

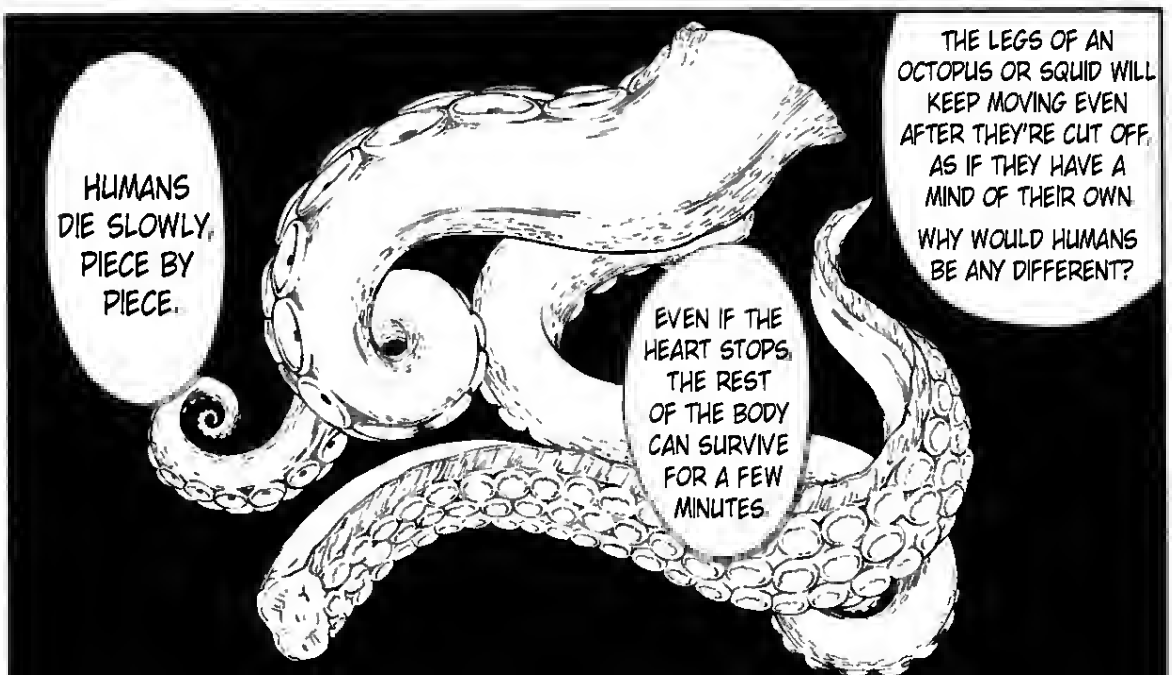

SO AS LIVING THINGS GREW MORE COMPLEX, THEY EVOLVED A SYSTEM FOR STORING MEMORY: THE BRAIN.
AND FROM THAT, CONSCIOUS THOUGHT WAS BORN.

...WHY?


BECAUSE MEMORY IS THE TRUE FORM OF LIFE.
LIFE IS MADE OF MEMORY.


WHY NOT?
RIGHT... SO MEMORY IS SPIRIT, AND LIFE IS BASICALLY JUST CONCENTRATED SPIRIT, AND MEMORY IS CONSCIOUSNESS... DOES THAT MEAN THAT MY HANDS AND FEET AND EVERYTHING ELSE ALL HAVE THEIR OWN MIND?

IT FITS IN RATHER NICELY WITH WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT YESTERDAY.


HUMANS DIE SLOWLY, PIECE BY PIECE.
EVEN IF THE HEART STOPS, THE REST OF THE BODY CAN SURVIVE FOR A FEW MINUTES.
THE LEGS OF AN OCTOPUS OR SQUID WILL KEEP MOVING EVEN AFTER THEY'RE CUT OFF, AS IF THEY HAVE A MIND OF THEIR OWN.
WHY WOULD HUMANS BE ANY DIFFERENT?

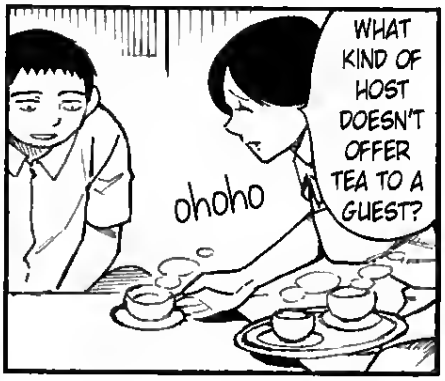
LET ME GUESS, IT WAS POSSESSED BY THE GHOST OF A DEAD CHILD?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, I ONCE WROTE A STORY ABOUT A DOLL WHOSE HAIR GREW...
YEAH ...

I DON'T THINK I LIKE THAT IDEA!
YOU'RE JUST BEING MORBID.
THE LIVER CAN ACTUALLY SURVIVE OUTSIDE THE BODY FOR HOURS.
AND THEY SAY THAT A CORPSE'S HAIR CAN GROW.

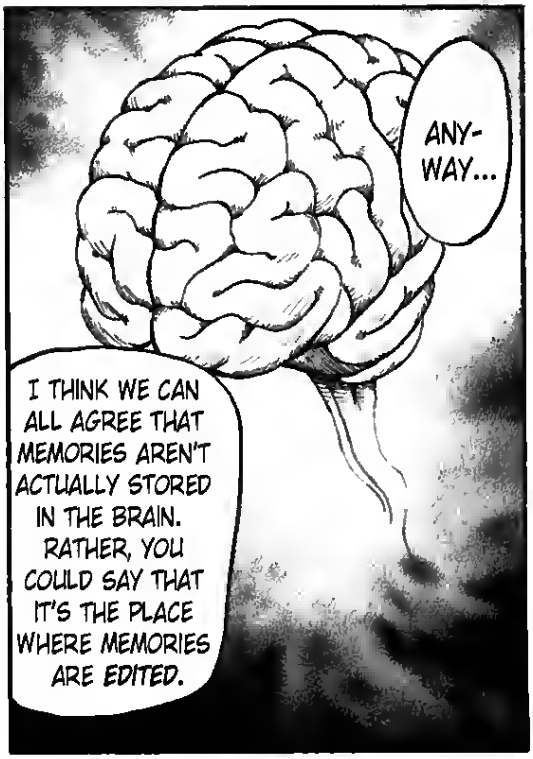
I'M JUST EXPLAINING HOW ENOKIZU CAN SEE THE THINGS HE DOES.
WELL, IN ANY CASE, I'M NOT TRYING TO TELL YOU WHAT TO BELIEVE.

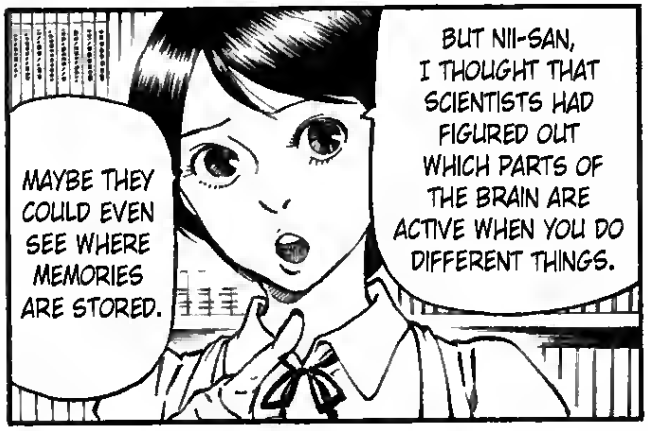
WOW, THIS IS GOOD!
...NOT BAD.
HMPH

HOLD THAT THOUGHT!

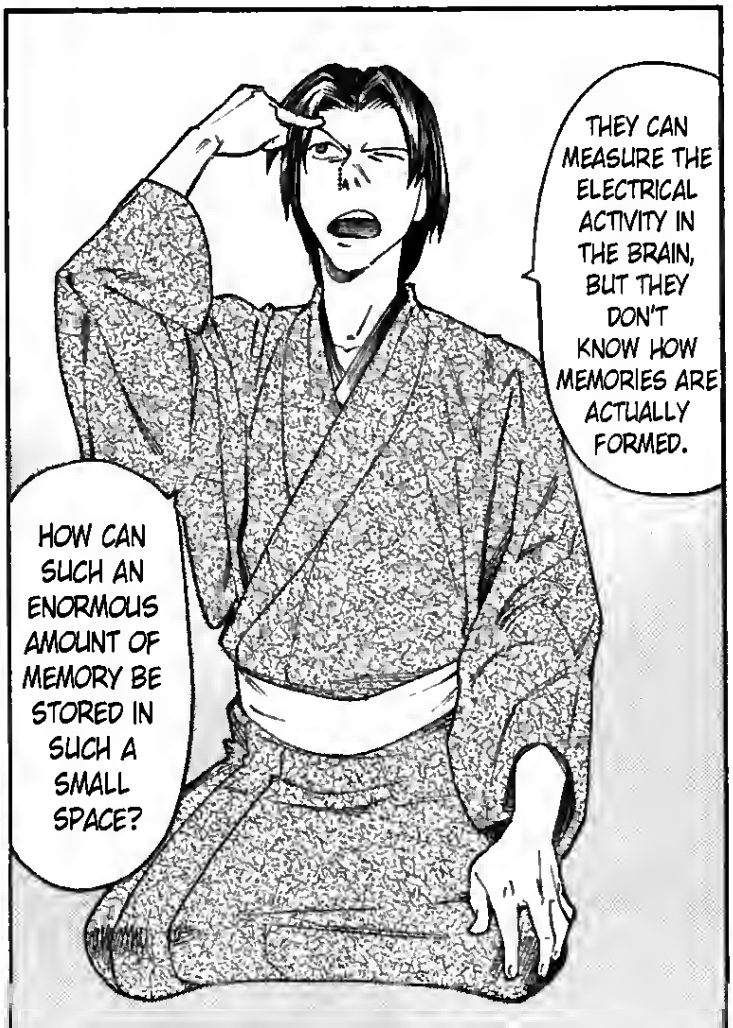

WHAT KIND OF HOST DOESN'T OFFER TEA TO A GUEST?
ohoho

YESTERDAY, YOU SAID THE BRAIN WAS A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL.

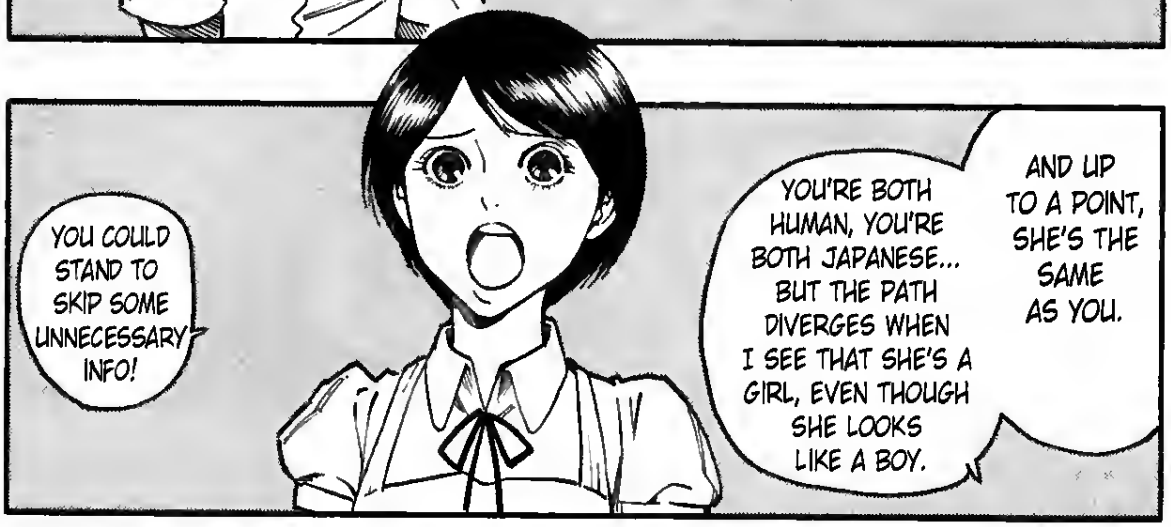

ANY-WAY...
I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT MEMORIES AREN'T ACTUALLY STORED IN THE BRAIN. RATHER, YOU COULD SAY THAT IT'S THE PLACE WHERE MEMORIES ARE EDITED.


BUT NII-SAN, I THOUGHT THAT SCIENTISTS HAD FIGURED OUT WHICH PARTS OF THE BRAIN ARE ACTIVE WHEN YOU DO DIFFERENT THINGS.
MAYBE THEY COULD EVEN SEE WHERE MEMORIES ARE STORED.

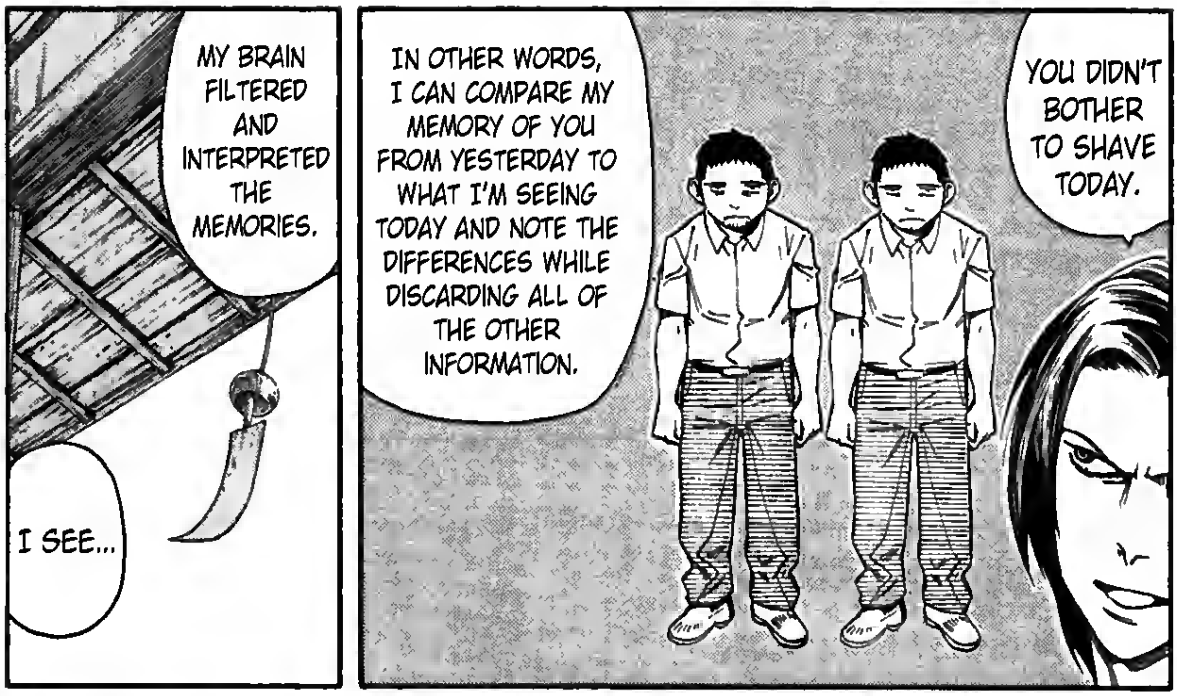
EVEN IF YOU ASSUME THAT ANY DUPLICATE INFORMATION IS DISCARDED, IT'S STILL A VAST QUANTITY OF INFORMATION.

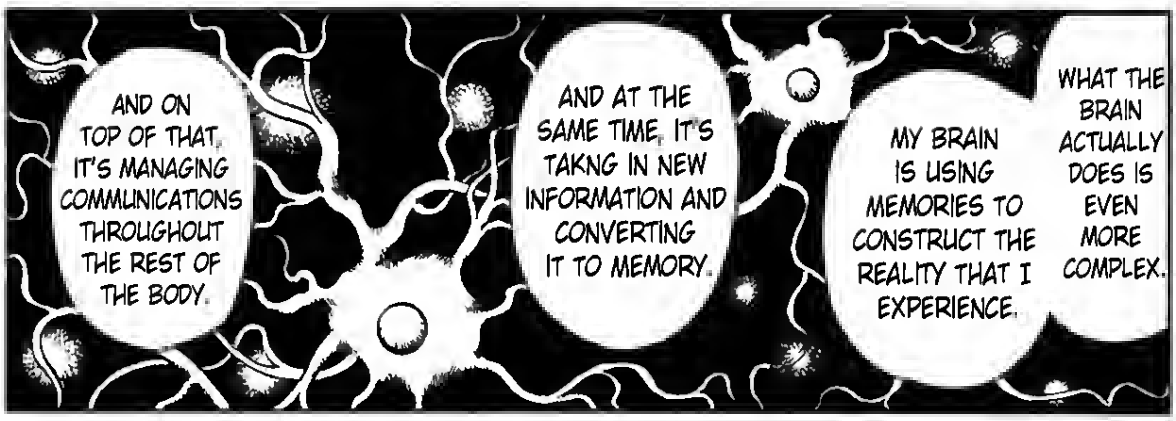

THEY CAN MEASURE THE ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY IN THE BRAIN, BUT THEY DON'T KNOW HOW MEMORIES ARE ACTUALLY FORMED.
HOW CAN SUCH AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF MEMORY BE STORED IN SUCH A SMALL SPACE?

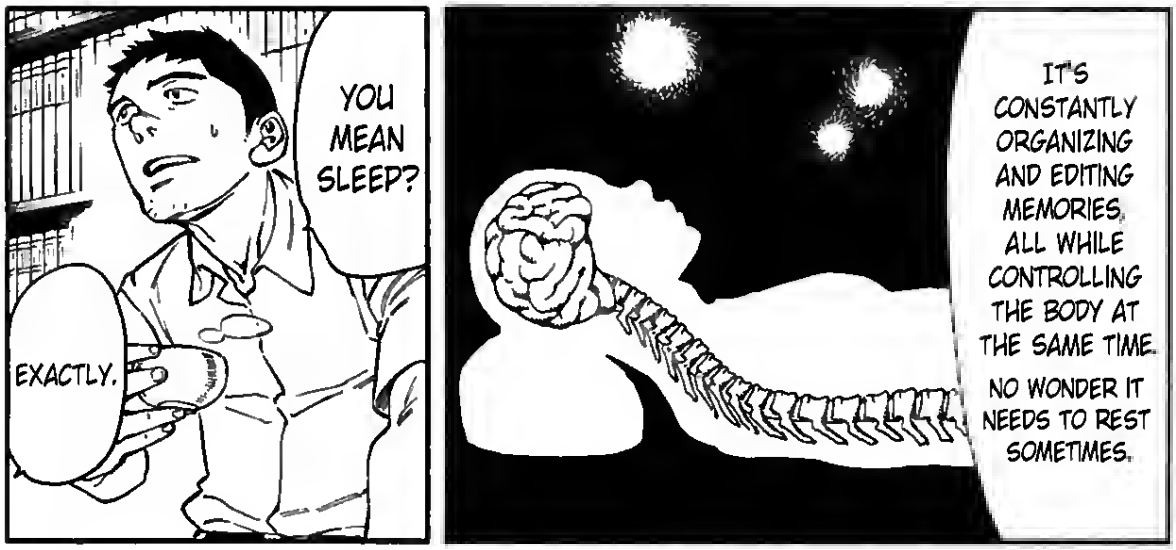
WHEN I RECOGNIZE YOU, I DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH A LIST OF OPTIONS.
AH, IS THAT AN ANIMAL? A MONKEY PERHAPS? NO, A HUMAN. JAPANESE. MALE. SOMEONE I KNOW. OH, IT'S SEKIGUCHI.
NO, I JUST SKIP OVER THE UNNECESSARY INFOR-MATION.
...YEAH, I GUESS.


AND UP TO A POINT, SHE'S THE SAME AS YOU.
YOU'RE BOTH HUMAN, YOU'RE BOTH JAPANESE... BUT THE PATH DIVERGES WHEN I SEE THAT SHE'S A GIRL, EVEN THOUGH SHE LOOKS LIKE A BOY.
YOU COULD STAND TO SKIP SOME UNNECESSARY INFO!

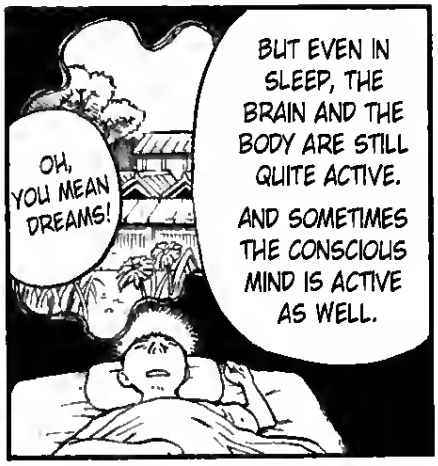
ANYWAY, BACK TO SEKIGUCHI-KUN.
YESTERDAY, YOU WOKE UP AROUND 8, BUT TODAY YOU GOT UP SOMETIME AFTER 11.
HUH!? HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT!?

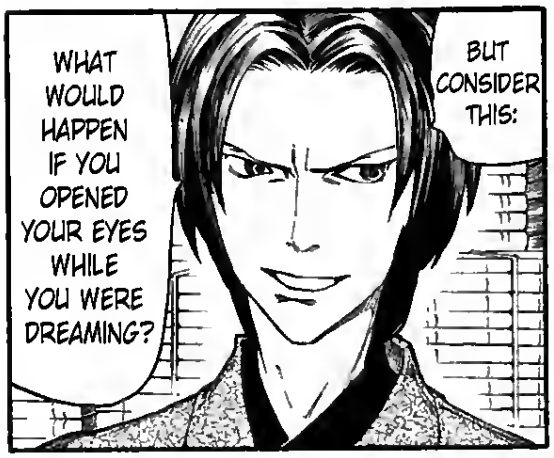

MY BRAIN FILTERED AND INTERPRETED THE MEMORIES.
I SEE...
IN OTHER WORDS, I CAN COMPARE MY MEMORY OF YOU FROM YESTERDAY TO WHAT I'M SEEING TODAY AND NOTE THE DIFFERENCES WHILE DISCARDING ALL OF THE OTHER INFORMATION.
YOU DIDN'T BOTHER TO SHAVE TODAY.

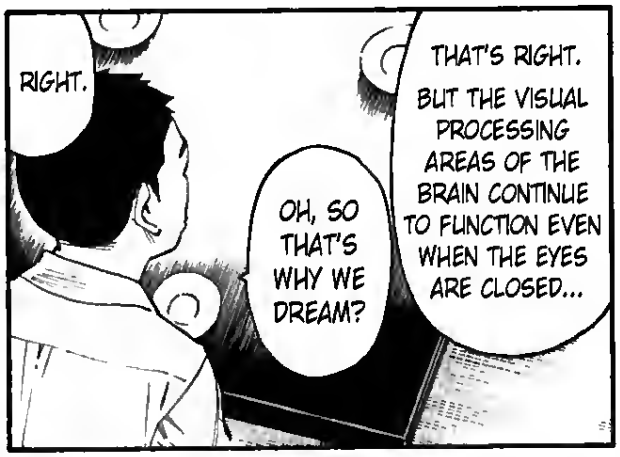

AND ON TOP OF THAT, IT'S MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS THROUGHOUT THE REST OF THE BODY.
AND AT THE SAME TIME, IT'S TAKNG IN NEW INFORMATION AND CONVERTING IT TO MEMORY.
MY BRAIN IS USING MEMORIES TO CONSTRUCT THE REALITY THAT I EXPERIENCE.
WHAT THE BRAIN ACTUALLY DOES IS EVEN MORE COMPLEX.

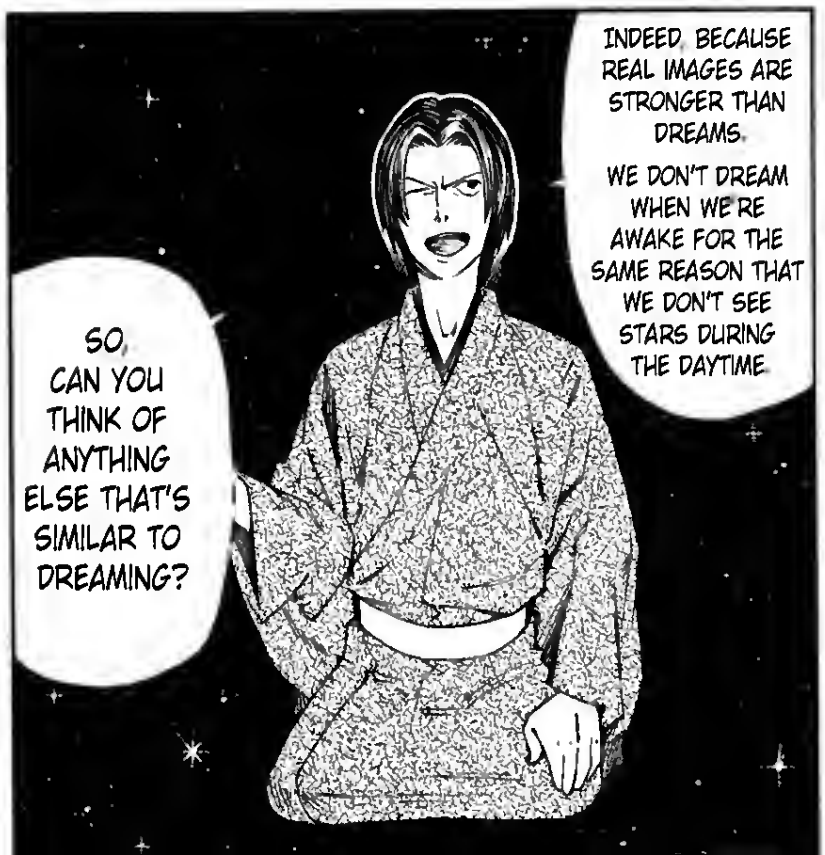

YOU MEAN SLEEP?
EXACTLY.
IT'S CONSTANTLY ORGANIZING AND EDITING MEMORIES, ALL WHILE CONTROLLING THE BODY AT THE SAME TIME.
NO WONDER IT NEEDS TO REST SOMETIMES.

INCIDENTALLY, DO YOU KNOW WHY WE CLOSE OUR EYES WHEN WE SLEEP?
HMMMM
MAYBE BECAUSE THE QUANTITY OF INFORMATION THAT ENTERS THROUGH THE EYES IS SO OVERWHELMING?


BUT EVEN IN SLEEP, THE BRAIN AND THE BODY ARE STILL QUITE ACTIVE.
AND SOMETIMES THE CONSCIOUS MIND IS ACTIVE AS WELL.
OH, YOU MEAN DREAMS!

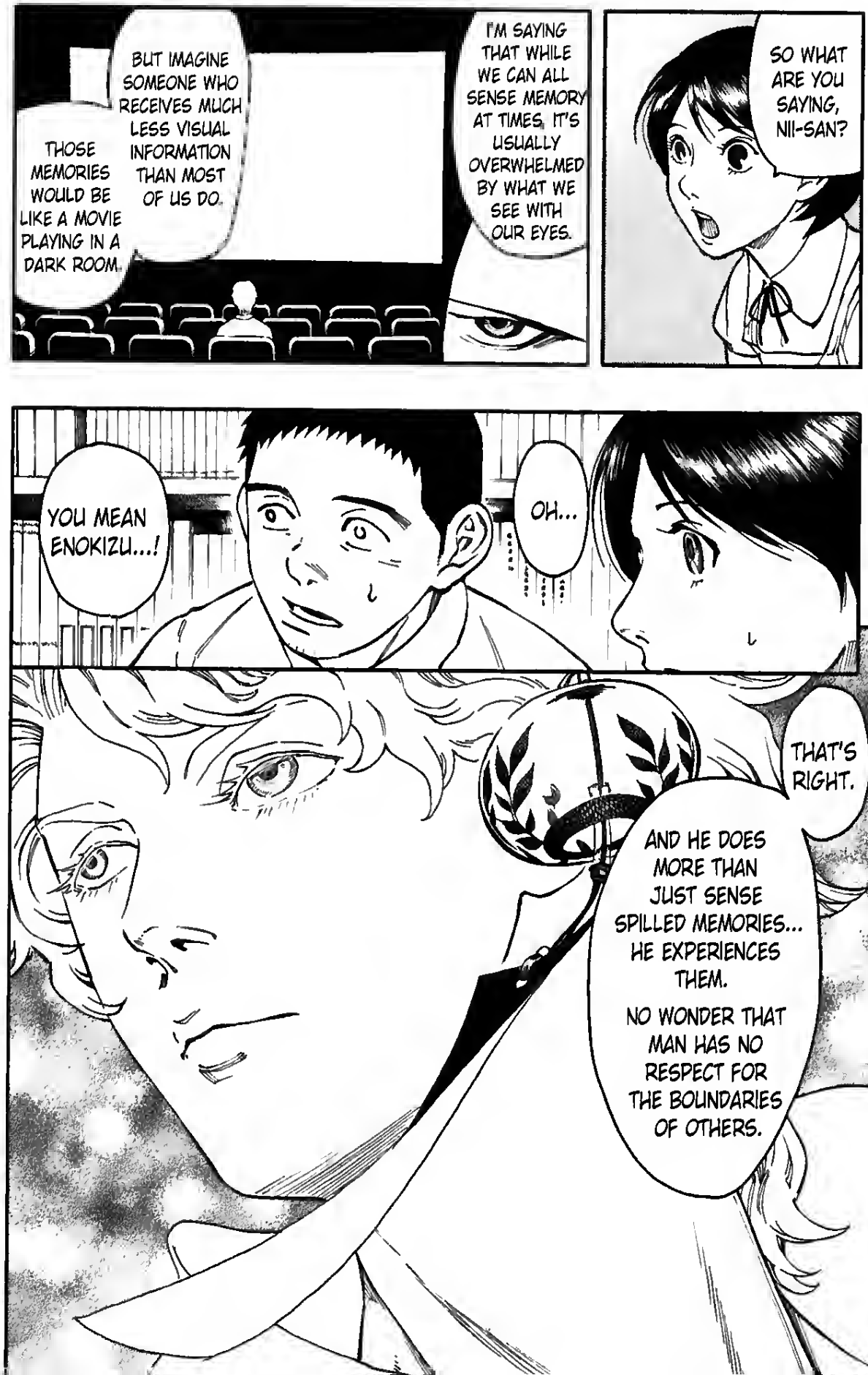

BUT CONSIDER THIS:
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU OPENED YOUR EYES WHILE YOU WERE DREAMING?


THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT THE VISUAL PROCESSING AREAS OF THE BRAIN CONTINUE TO FUNCTION EVEN WHEN THE EYES ARE CLOSED...
OH, SO THAT'S WHY WE DREAM?
RIGHT.


INDEED. BECAUSE REAL IMAGES ARE STRONGER THAN DREAMS.
WE DON'T DREAM WHEN WE'RE AWAKE FOR THE SAME REASON THAT WE DON'T SEE STARS DURING THE DAYTIME.
SO, CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING ELSE THAT'S SIMILAR TO DREAMING?

UH...
YOU'D PROBABLY WAKE UP?

THERE'S ONE DIFFERENCE, THOUGH. WHEN YOU WAKE FROM A DREAM, YOU KNOW IT WASN'T REAL.
EXACTLY! DREAMS AND IMAGINATION ARE VERY SIMILAR.
HM... IMAGI-NATION, I GUESS.
ANYWAY, IF WE ACCEPT THAT MEMORY IS AN ASPECT OF MATERIAL EXISTENCE ITSELF, IT'S NOT HARD TO IMAGINE THAT OUR MEMORIES COULD SPILL OUT INTO THE WORLD AROUND US.
THAT MUST BE WHY MOST GHOST SIGHTINGS HAPPEN AT NIGHT.
CONSCIOUS THOUGHT IS SOMETHING THAT'S GENE-RATED IN THE BRAIN ITSELF - HOW COULD OTHER PEOPLE SEE THAT?
I'M TALKING ABOUT MEMORY, NOT CONSCIOUS THOUGHT.
IS THAT WHY YOU AND A-CHAN ALWAYS SEEM TO KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING!?


I'M SAYING THAT WHILE WE CAN ALL SENSE MEMORY AT TIMES, IT'S USUALLY OVERWHELMED BY WHAT WE SEE WITH OUR EYES.
BUT IMAGINE SOMEONE WHO RECEIVES MUCH LESS VISUAL INFORMATION THAN MOST OF US DO.
THOSE MEMORIES WOULD BE LIKE A MOVIE PLAYING IN A DARK ROOM.
SO WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, NII-SAN?
YOU MEAN ENOKIZU...!
OH...
THAT'S RIGHT.
AND HE DOES MORE THAN JUST SENSE SPILLED MEMORIES... HE EXPERIENCES THEM.
NO WONDER THAT MAN HAS NO RESPECT FOR THE BOUNDARIES OF OTHERS.

SO MOST LIKELY, WHEN ENOKIZU GLANCED INTO THAT WOMAN'S MEMORIES, HE SAW A YOUNGER VERSION OF YOU.
AND HE MUST HAVE SEEN SOMETHING THAT LOOKED LIKE A CORPSE... NATURALLY, HE'D ASSUME THAT IT WAS FUJIMAKI.

IF SHE WERE A MURDERER, SHE WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED TO OPEN AN INVESTIGATION, RIGHT?

BUT ENOKIZU HAD NO WAY OF UNDER-STANDING WHAT HE WAS SEEING, SO HE STARTED ASKING QUESTIONS.
HE WANTED TO KNOW WHY SHE'D COME TO SEE HIM.

RIGHT, BUT SHE CLAIMED THAT IT HAD BEEN HER IDEA TO VISIT HIM.

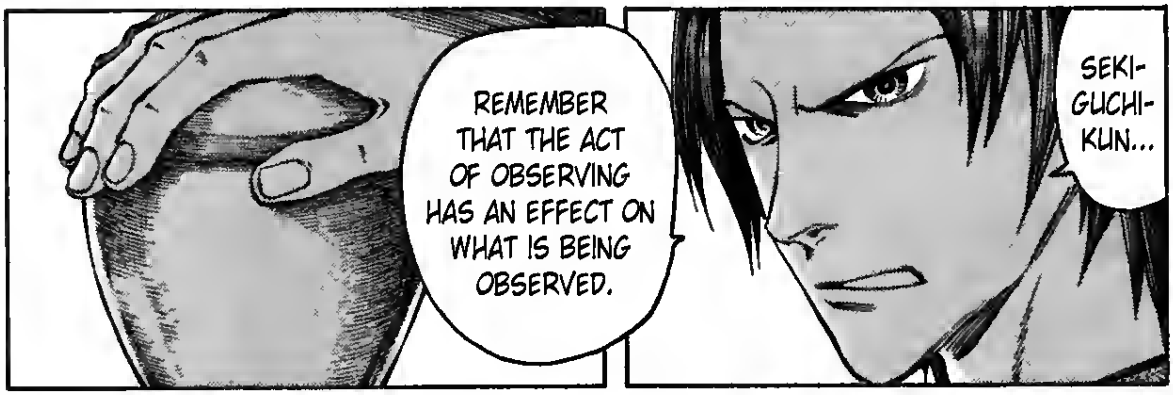
It's sort of starting to make sense...
AND THEN HE ASKED HER ABOUT YOU.
THAT'S WHY HE WANTED TO KNOW IF SHE'D BEEN LYING.
ENOKIZU'S EYESIGHT WAS POOR EVEN WHEN HE WAS A CHILD, AND SOMETIMES HE SAW THINGS.
WHEN WE BECAME FRIENDS, I RECOGNIZED THE NATURE OF HIS ABILITY.
AT FIRST HE THOUGHT IT WAS NORMAL, BUT EVENTUALLY HE REALIZED THAT NOT EVERYONE COULD SEE THE THINGS HE SAW.

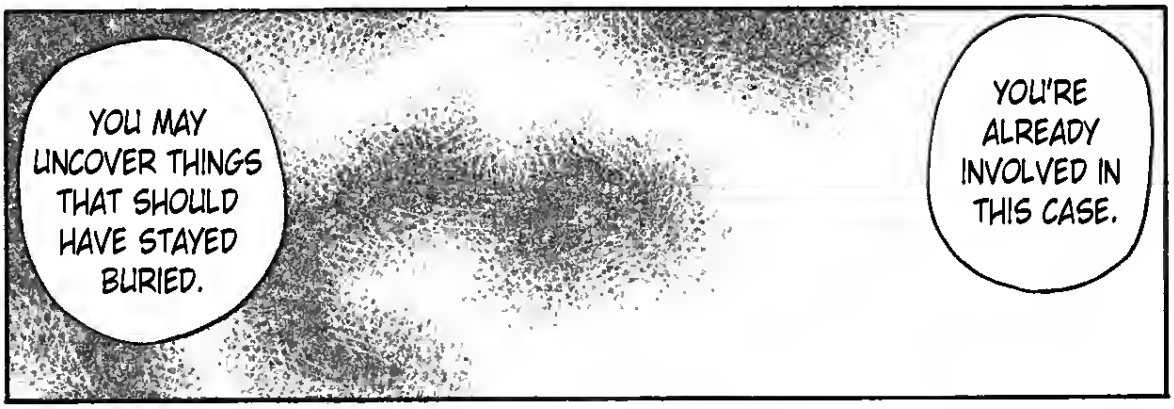
.....
IRONICALLY, THE LOSS OF HALF HIS VISION ALLOWED HIM TO SEE OTHER THINGS MORE CLEARLY.
HIS LEFT EYE WAS BLINDED BY A SIGNAL FLARE DURING THE WAR.
HOW-EVER...
WHO KNOWS? THE POSSI-BILITIES ARE ENDLESS.
WHAT DID ENOKIZU SEE IN KUONJI RYOUKO'S MEMORIES?
KYOU-GOKU-DOU...
SPIRIT POSSES-SION?
THAT COULD COMPLICATE THE SITUATION.
I WONDER IF HER FAMILY HAS A HISTORY OF SPIRIT POSSES-SION.
WHAT IS IT?

.....
Here.
TOSS
WELL, THERE'S NO POINT IN SPECULATING.
WELL...
.....
SO, SEKIGUCHI-KUN, WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO ABOUT THIS CASE?

IF I CAN, I WANT TO SOLVE IT.

WELL, YOU CAN'T RELY ON ENOKIZU.
HE'LL JUST MAKE A MESS OF THINGS.
.....

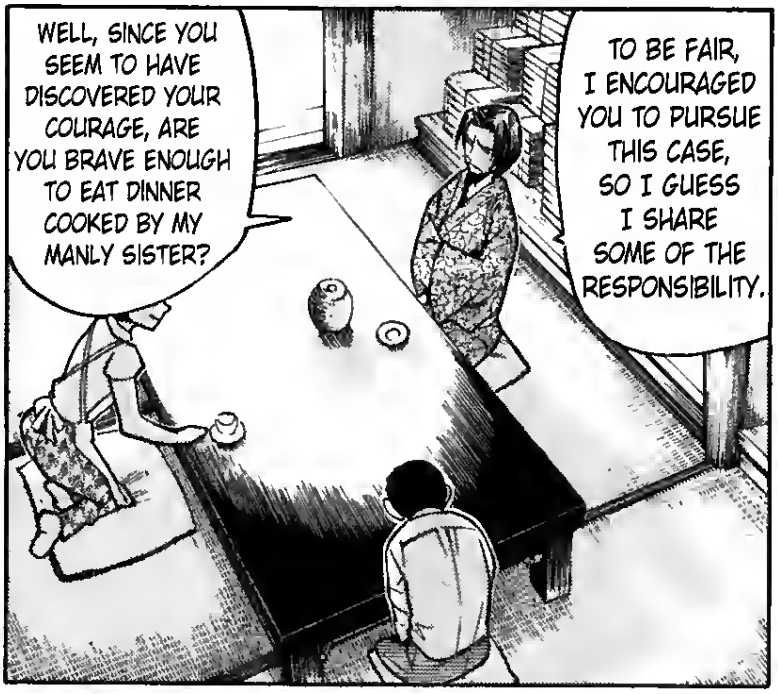

REMEMBER THAT THE ACT OF OBSERVING HAS AN EFFECT ON WHAT IS BEING OBSERVED.
SEKI-GUCHI-KUN...


YOU MAY UNCOVER THINGS THAT SHOULD HAVE STAYED BURIED.
YOU'RE ALREADY INVOLVED IN THIS CASE.

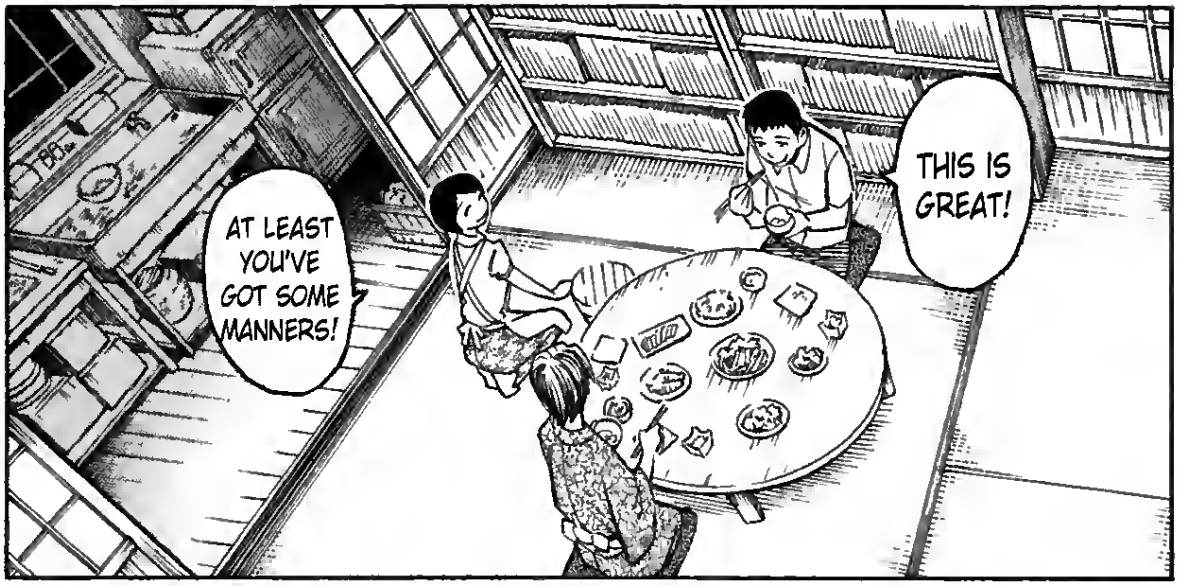
BUT...
BUT I CAN'T JUST LET IT GO.

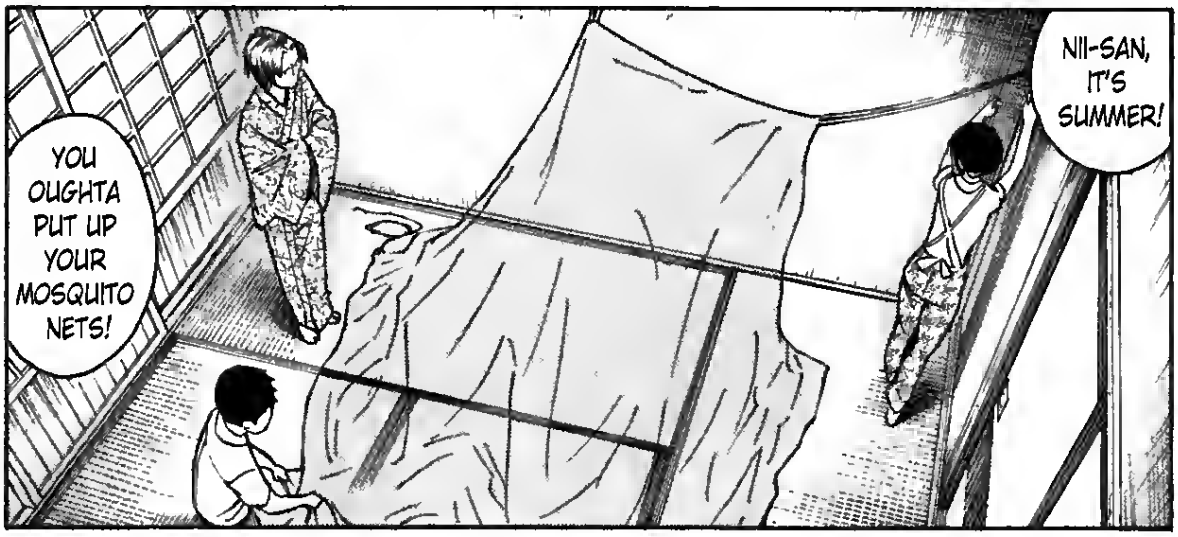
FOR WHATEVER REASON, YOU'RE OBSESSED WITH THIS CASE... AND WITH THAT KUONJI RYOUKO WOMAN.
WELL, IF SOMEONE AS WEAK-WILLED AS YOU CAN SAY THAT, THEN WHO AM I TO STOP YOU?

THE CONSE-QUENCES COULD BE DEADLY.
BUT YOU NEED TO KEEP A CLEAR HEAD.
IF YOU ALLOW YOUR BIAS TO CLOUD YOUR JUDGEMENT...

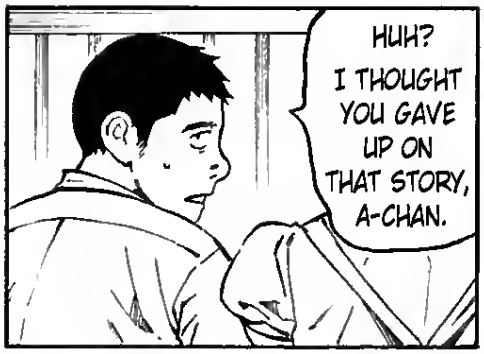

WELL, SINCE YOU SEEM TO HAVE DISCOVERED YOUR COURAGE, ARE YOU BRAVE ENOUGH TO EAT DINNER COOKED BY MY MANLY SISTER?
TO BE FAIR, I ENCOURAGED YOU TO PURSUE THIS CASE, SO I GUESS I SHARE SOME OF THE RESPONSIBILITY.

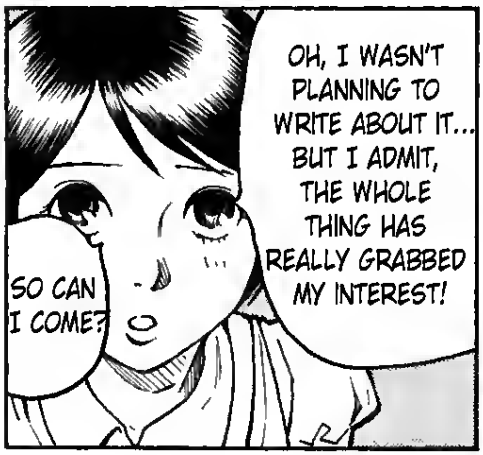
So I need to approach this case the right way...
But how?


AT LEAST YOU'VE GOT SOME MANNERS!
THIS IS GREAT!


YOU OUGHTA PUT UP YOUR MOSQUITO NETS!
NII-SAN, IT'S SUMMER!

HUH? A FAVOR?
SENSEI, CAN I ASK YOU A FAVOR?

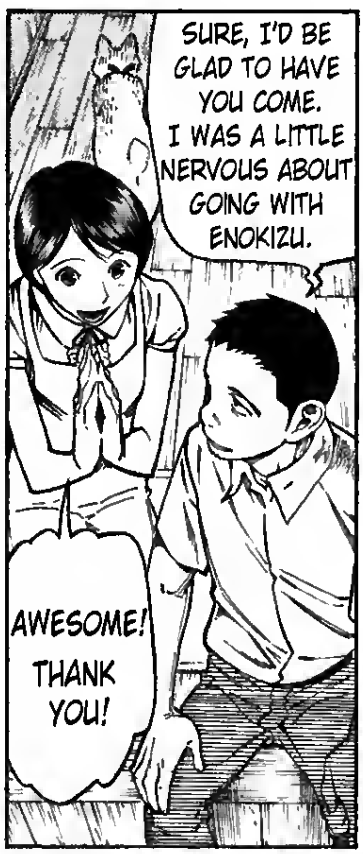

HUH?
I THOUGHT YOU GAVE UP ON THAT STORY, A-CHAN.

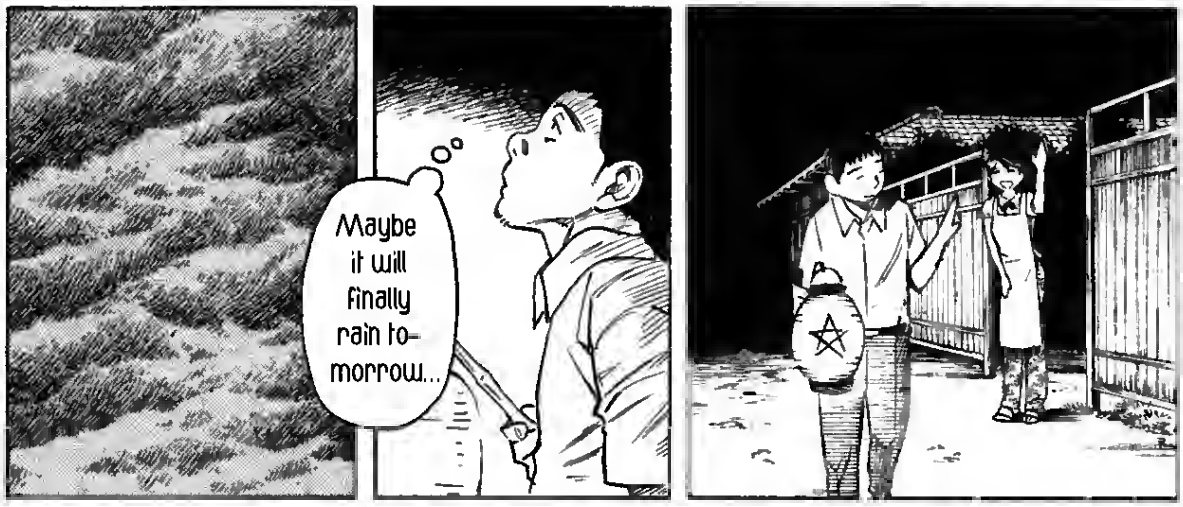

OH, I WASN'T PLANNING TO WRITE ABOUT IT... BUT I ADMIT, THE WHOLE THING HAS REALLY GRABBED MY INTEREST!
SO CAN I COME?

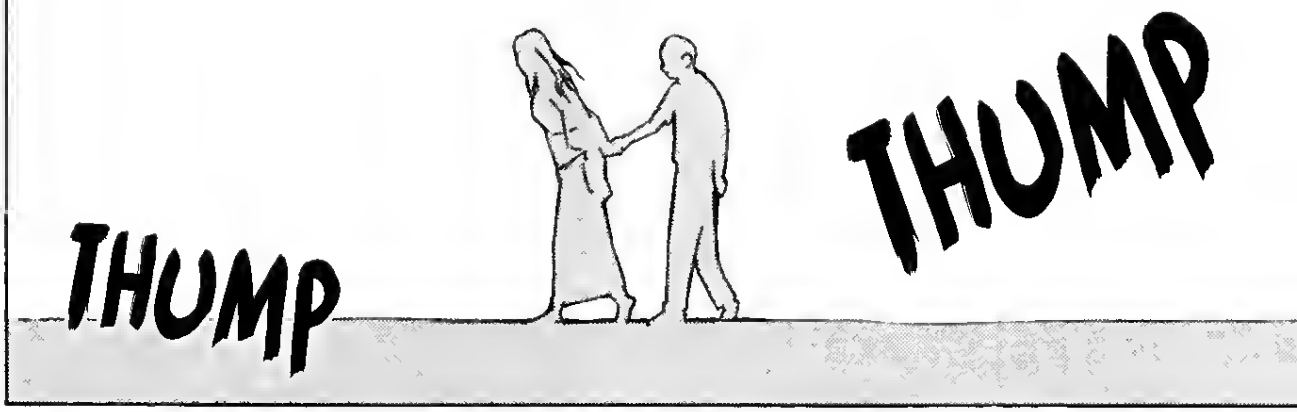
CAN I COME WITH YOU TOMORROW?

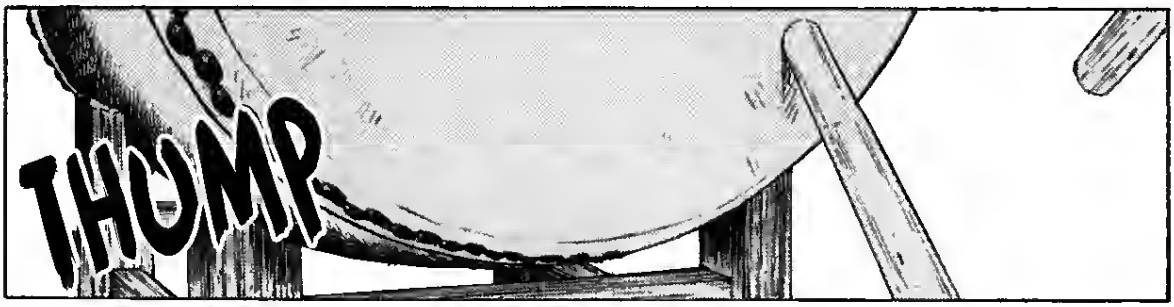
BUT DON'T TELL HER, OKAY?
MORE SECRETS!
GOTCHA.

BUT LET'S KEEP THIS A SECRET FROM MY BROTHER AND MY BOSS, OKAY?
MY BROTHER WOULD JUST GET MAD, AND MY BOSS WOULD THINK I WAS BEING SILLY.

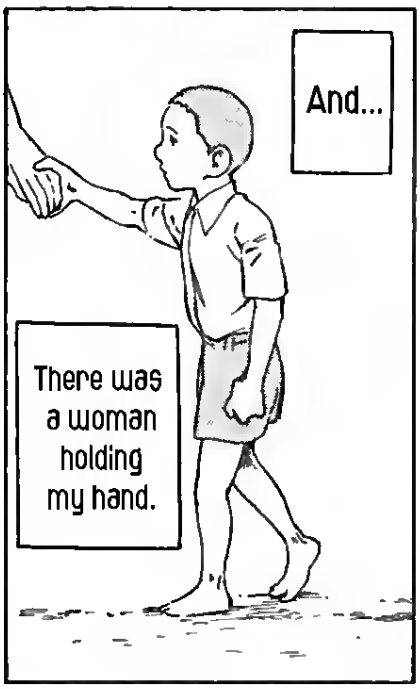

SURE, I'D BE GLAD TO HAVE YOU COME. I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT GOING WITH ENOKIZU.
AWESOME! THANK YOU!


Maybe it will finally rain tomorrow...

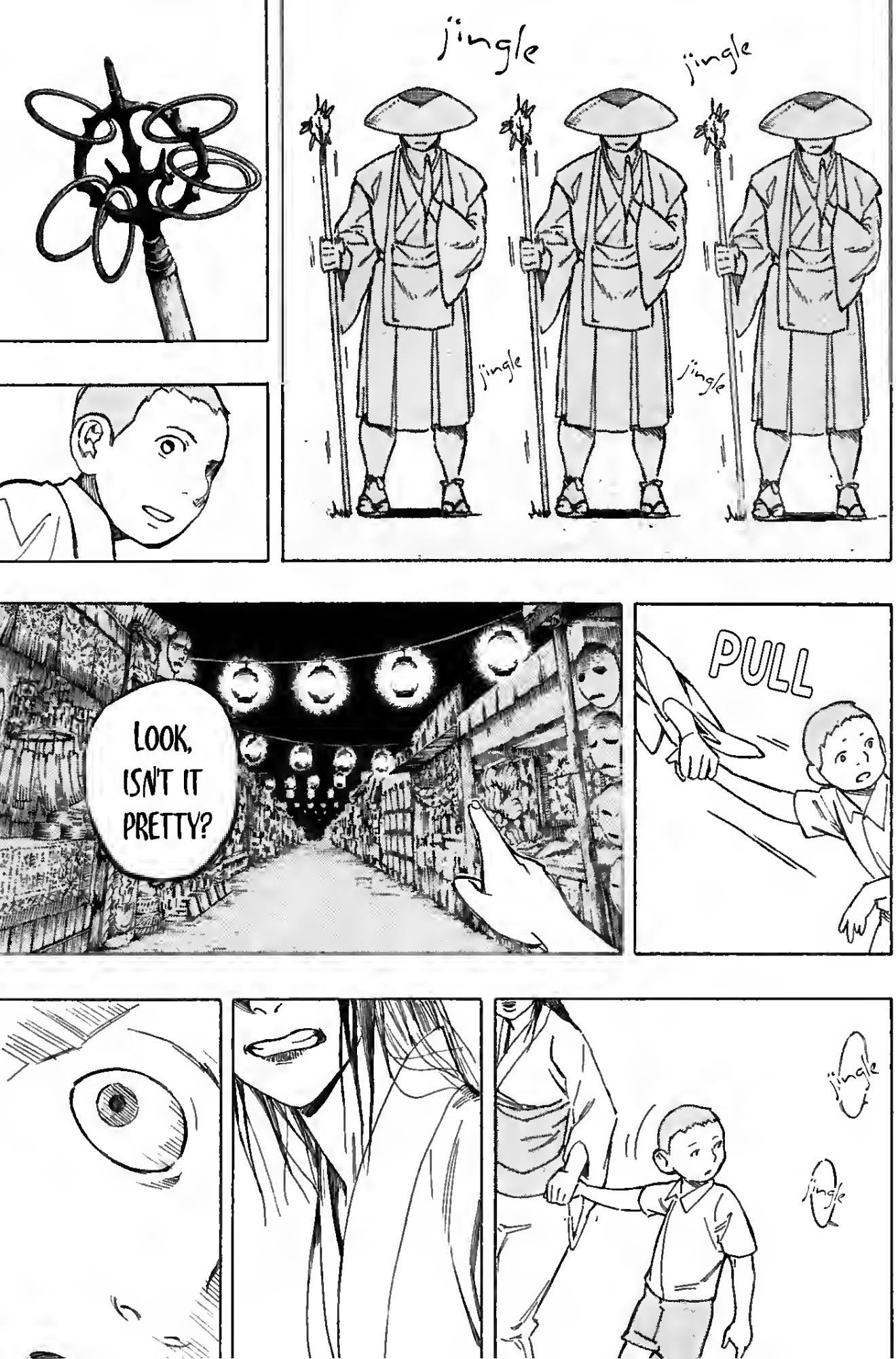

THUMP
THUMP


THUMP

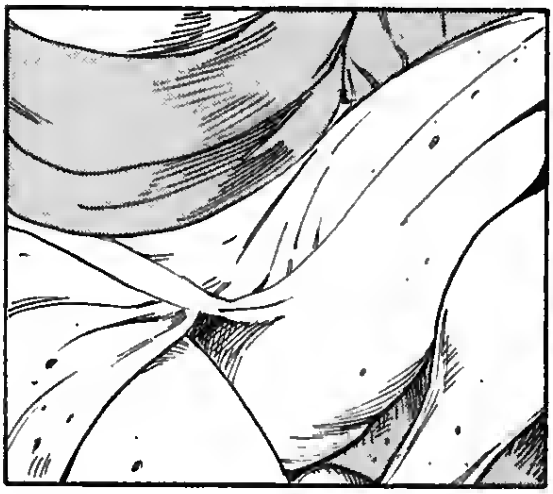
jingle
jingle


And...
There was a woman holding my hand.

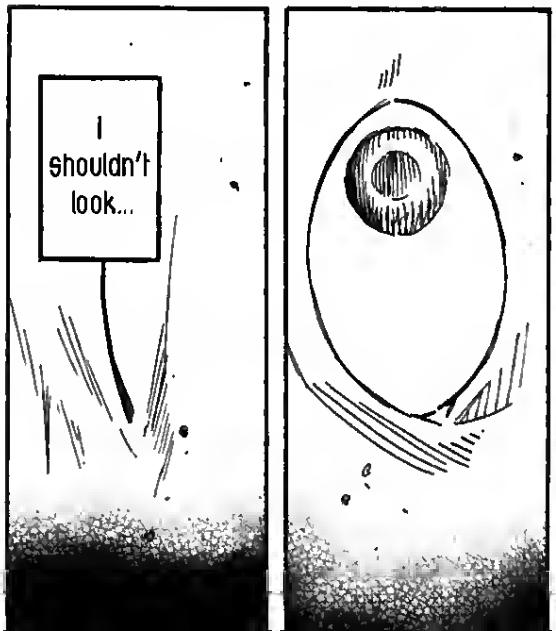
In my dream, I was a child again.

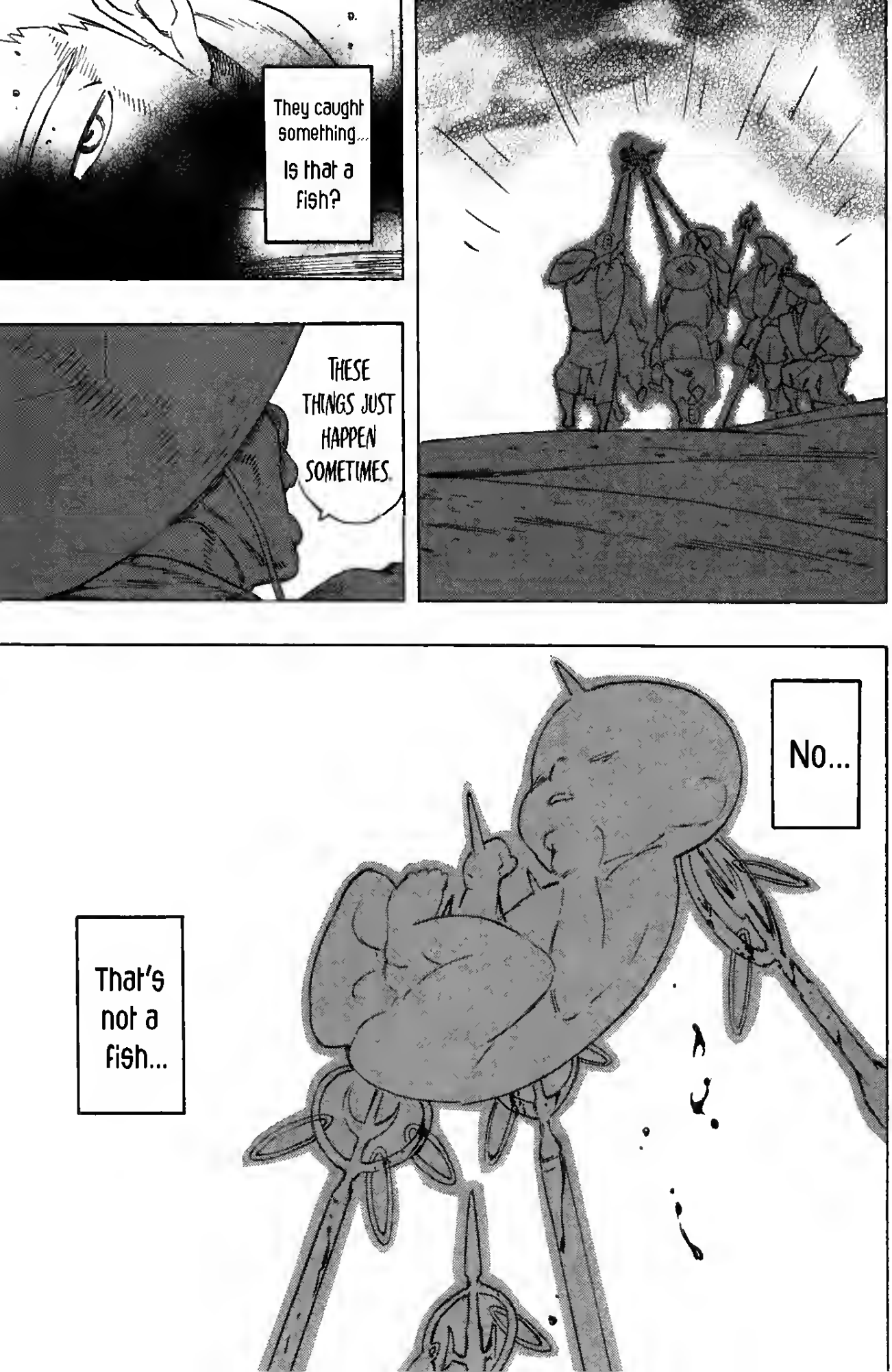

jingle
jingle
jingle
jingle
LOOK, ISN'T IT PRETTY?
PULL
jingle
jingle

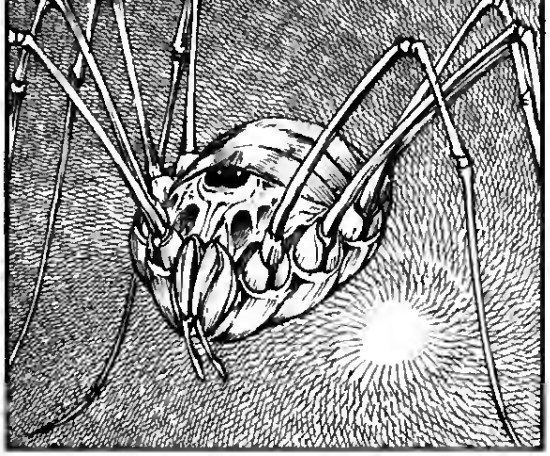
I'm sorry! Please don't hurt me!
Please...



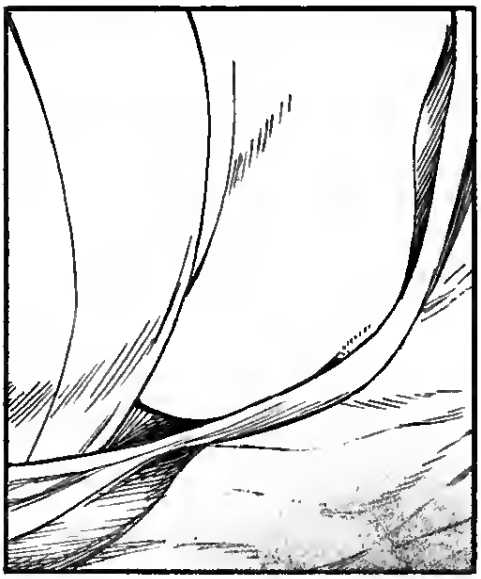
Who is this woman, and why is she doing this?

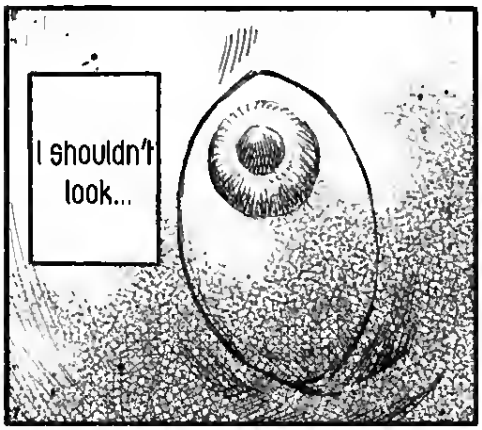

I shouldn't look...

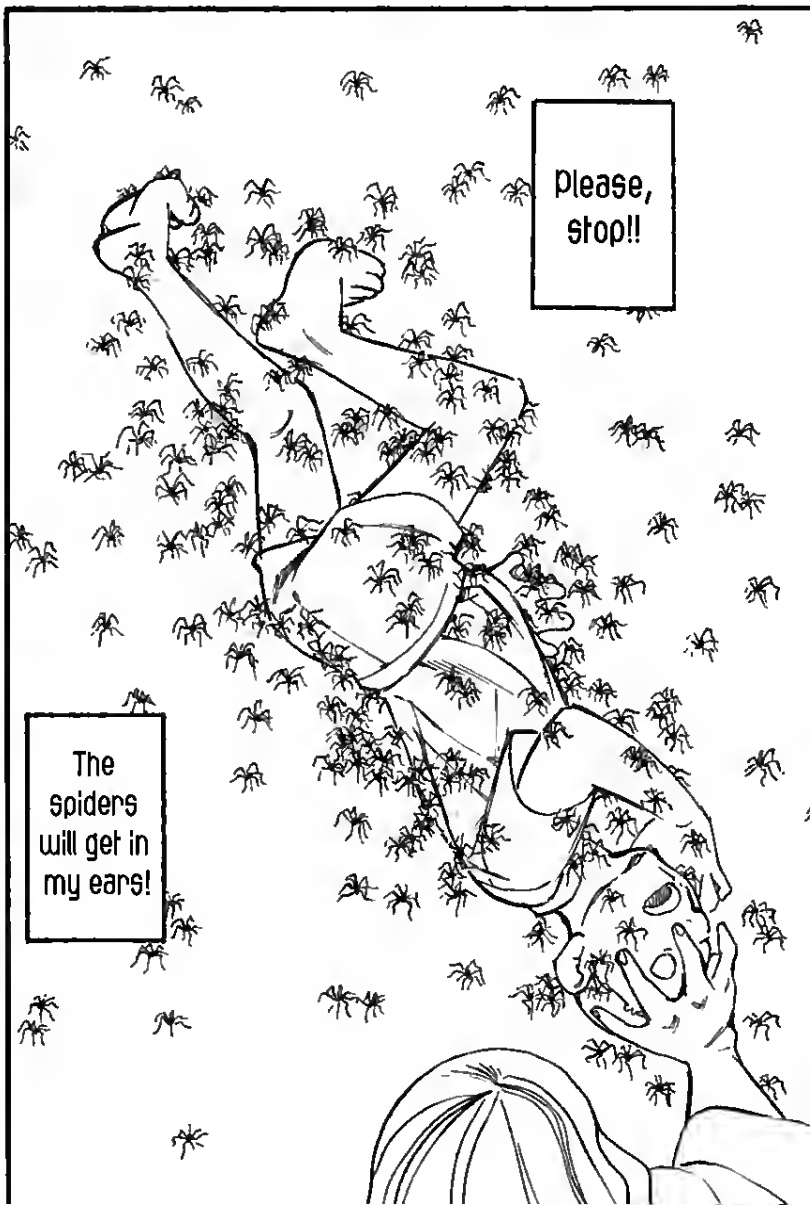

They caught something...
Is that a fish?
THESE THINGS JUST HAPPEN SOMETIMES.
No...
That's not a fish...



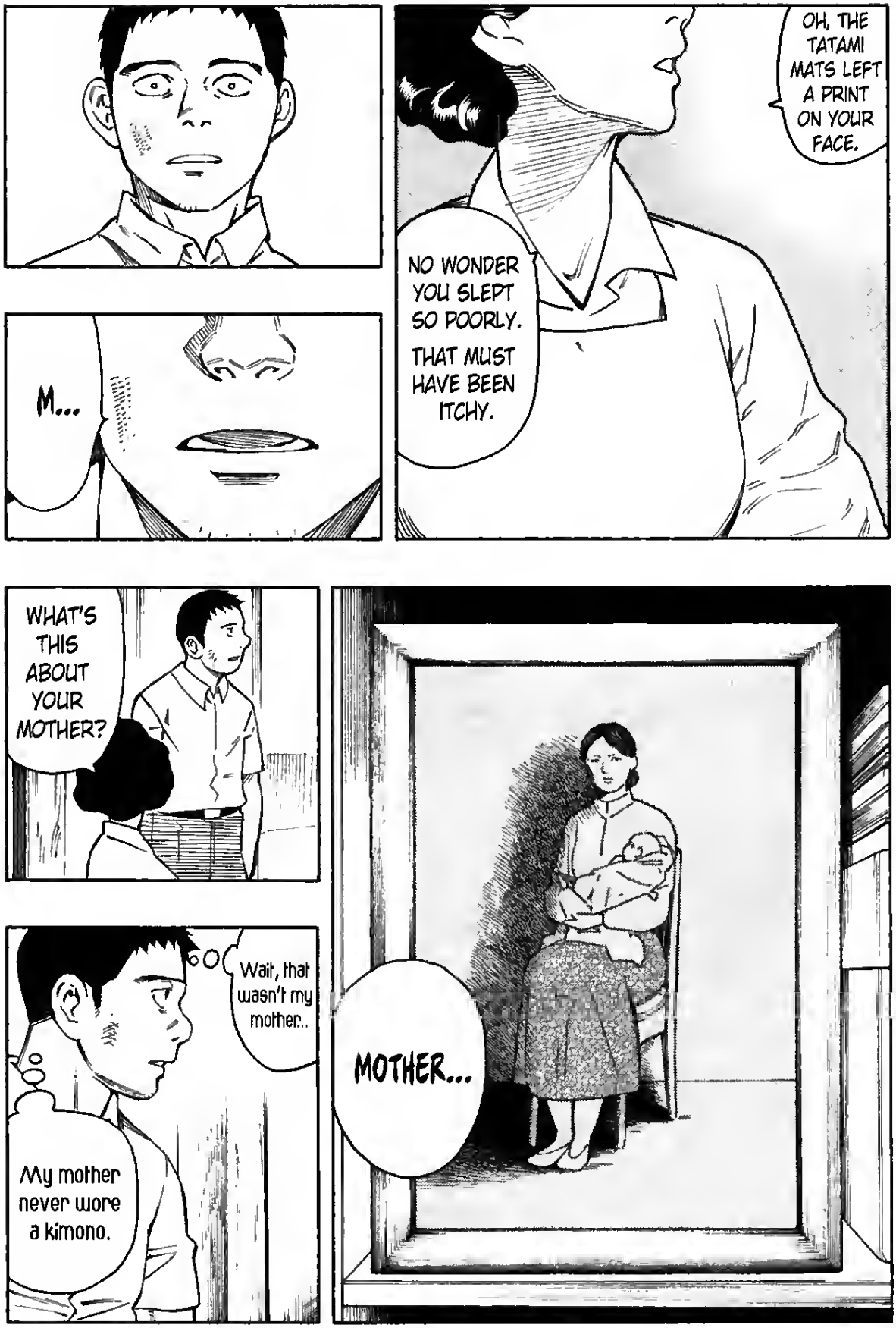
Please, stop!
The sand is getting in my ears!




I shouldn't look...


Please, stop!!
The spiders will get in my ears!

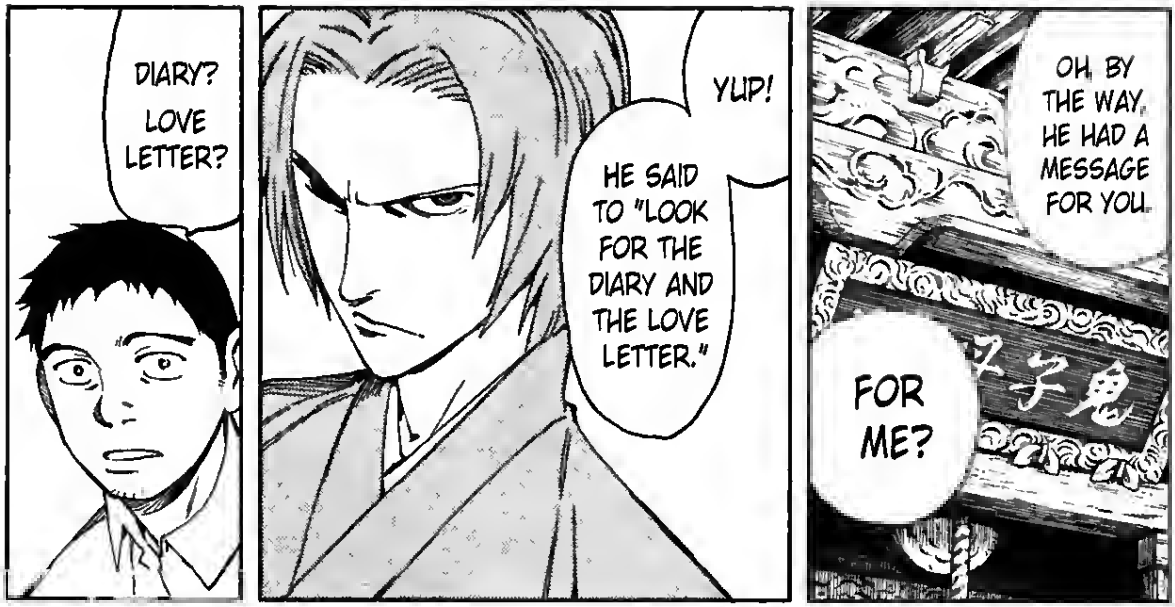
I should go get some tea.
It was just a dream...
WHAT'S WRONG, DEAR?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE STILL HALF-ASLEEP.
NO, I...
pat
I'M FINE. JUST A HEAD-ACHE.
pat.
?

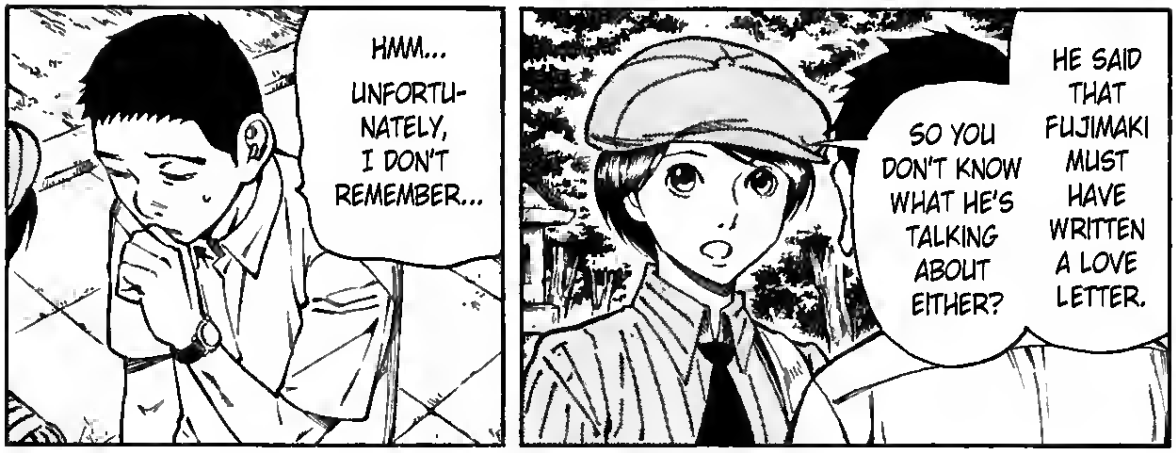

OH, THE TATAMI MATS LEFT A PRINT ON YOUR FACE.
NO WONDER YOU SLEPT SO POORLY.
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN ITCHY.
M...
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?
MOTHER...
Wait, that wasn't my mother...
My mother never wore a kimono.

...KUONJI RYOUKO.
But then who was that woman in the kimono?

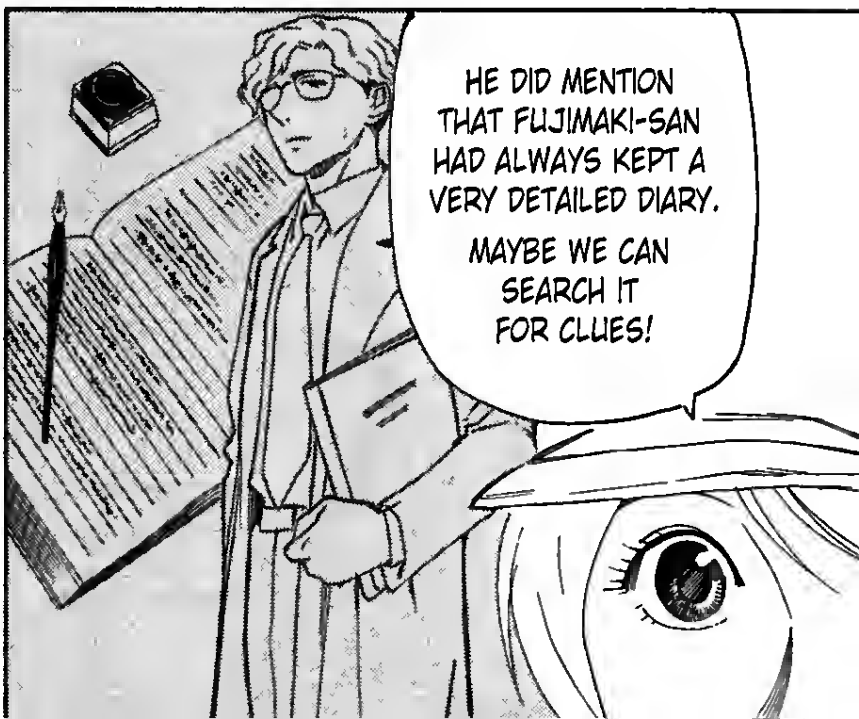
KUONJI? WHO'S THAT?
GASP
YOU HAVE NIGHTMARES AND YOU ALWAYS OVERSLEEP.
YOU'RE SUCH A CHILD.
NEVER MIND, IT'S NOTHING.
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT A STORY I'M WRITING...
AND LATELY YOU'VE BEEN GOING OUT EVERY DAY!
OH...
I'M DOING RESEARCH FOR A NOVEL.

VROOM
Sen-sei!
DOES YOUR SCARY BROTHER KNOW THAT YOU'RE HERE?
YUP, HE CAUGHT ME!
OH WELL.
YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM HIM..
huff


DIARY?
LOVE LETTER?
YUP!
HE SAID TO "LOOK FOR THE DIARY AND THE LOVE LETTER."
OH, BY THE WAY, HE HAD A MESSAGE FOR YOU.
FOR ME?

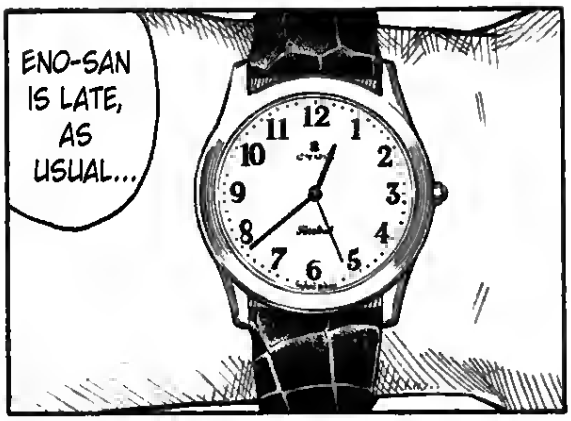

HMM...
UNFORTU-NATELY, I DON'T REMEMBER...
SO YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT EITHER?
HE SAID THAT FUJIMAKI MUST HAVE WRITTEN A LOVE LETTER.

THAT WOULD BE EASY...
BUT IF HE WAS PLANNING TO RUN AWAY, I DOUBT HE WOULD HAVE LEFT THAT KIND OF EVIDENCE BEHIND.

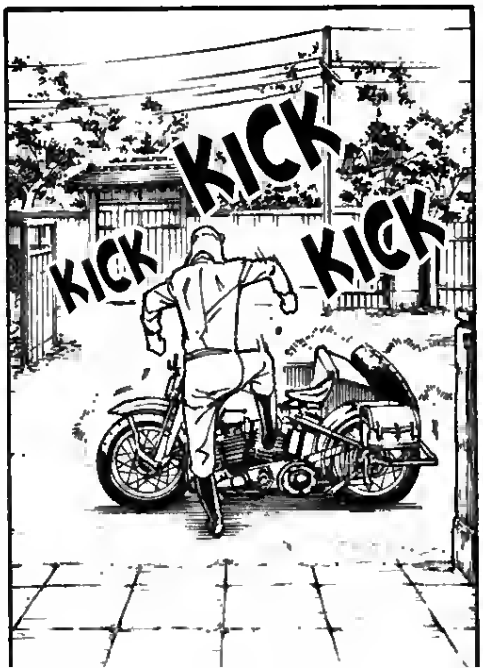

HE DID MENTION THAT FUJIMAKI-SAN HAD ALWAYS KEPT A VERY DETAILED DIARY.
MAYBE WE CAN SEARCH IT FOR CLUES!

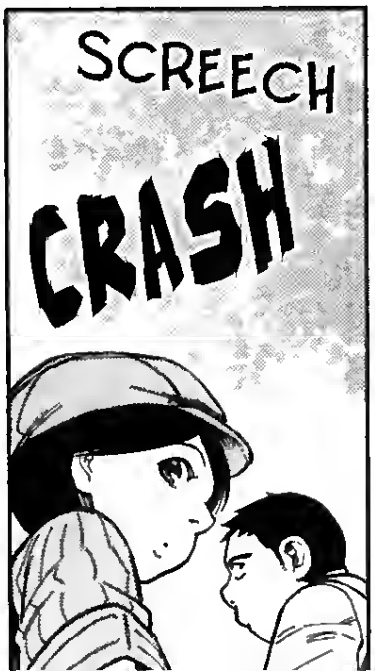
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? HE'S YOUR BROTHER!
I WONDER WHY?
WHO KNOWS... ANYWAY, MY BROTHER SAID THAT WE SHOULD LOOK FOR A DIARY FROM ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO.
HE SAYS THAT'S THE IMPORTANT ONE.

OKAY!
HE PROBABLY GOT BORED AND FORGOT ABOUT US.
LET'S GO.

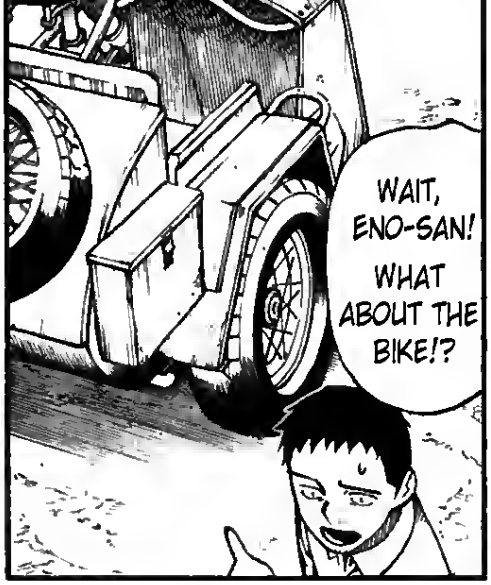

ENO-SAN IS LATE, AS USUAL...

HUH?
OH! THERE HE IS!

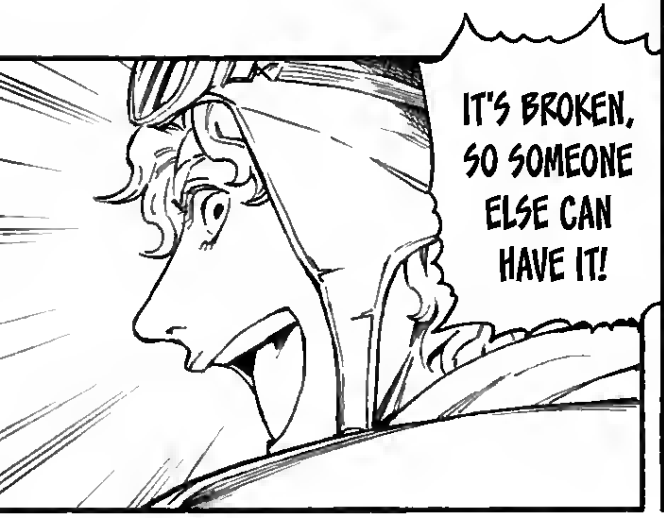

KICK
KICK
KICK


SCREECH
CRASH

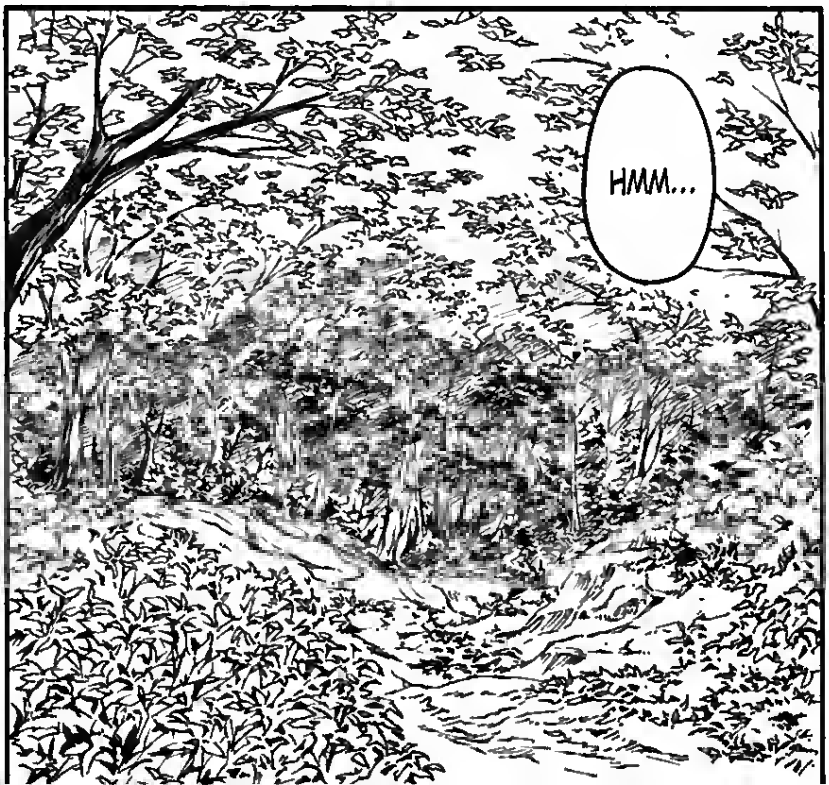
Enokizu-san!
OOOH, A-CHAN, YOU'RE AS CUTE AS EVER!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
SORRY, I INVITED MYSELF!
DO YOU MIND?
Not at all!
You can go home now, Seki-kun!
WHAT KIND OF DETECTIVE OUTFIT IS THAT?


WAIT, ENO-SAN!
WHAT ABOUT THE BIKE!?

COME ON, LET'S GO!
TO THE CLINIC!!

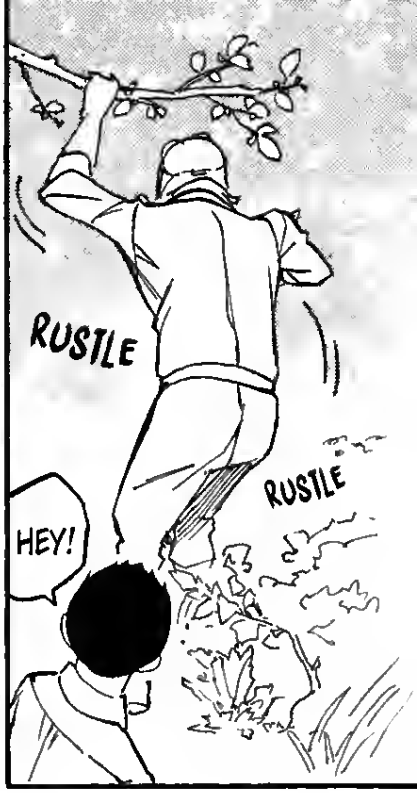

IT'S BROKEN, SO SOMEONE ELSE CAN HAVE IT!

ARE YOU SURE WE'RE GOING THE RIGHT WAY?
YOU KNOW, THE TOWN IS THAT WAY...


HMM...

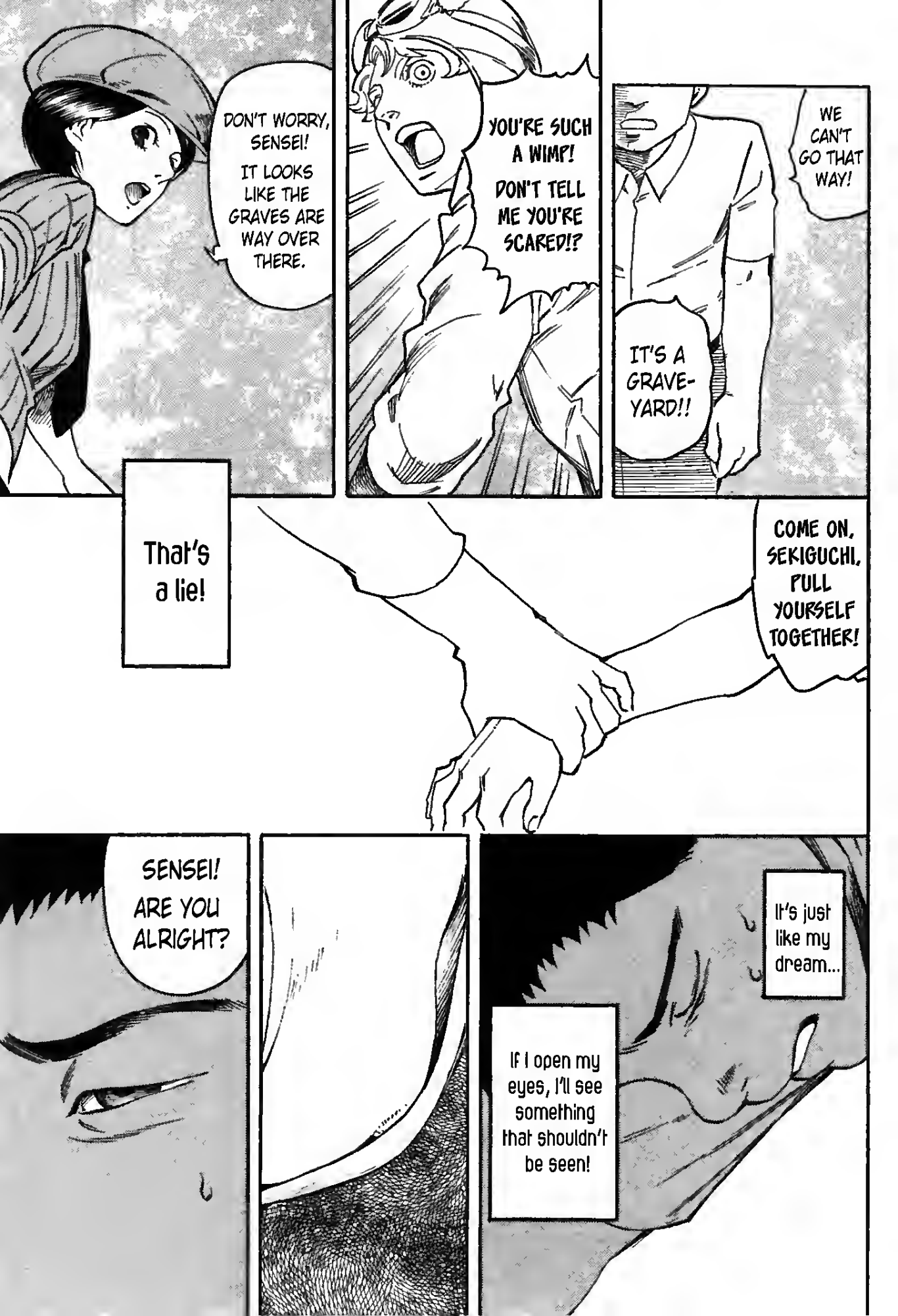
I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING!
YOU'RE FORGETFUL, SO I ASKED KAZUTORA FOR DIRECTIONS.

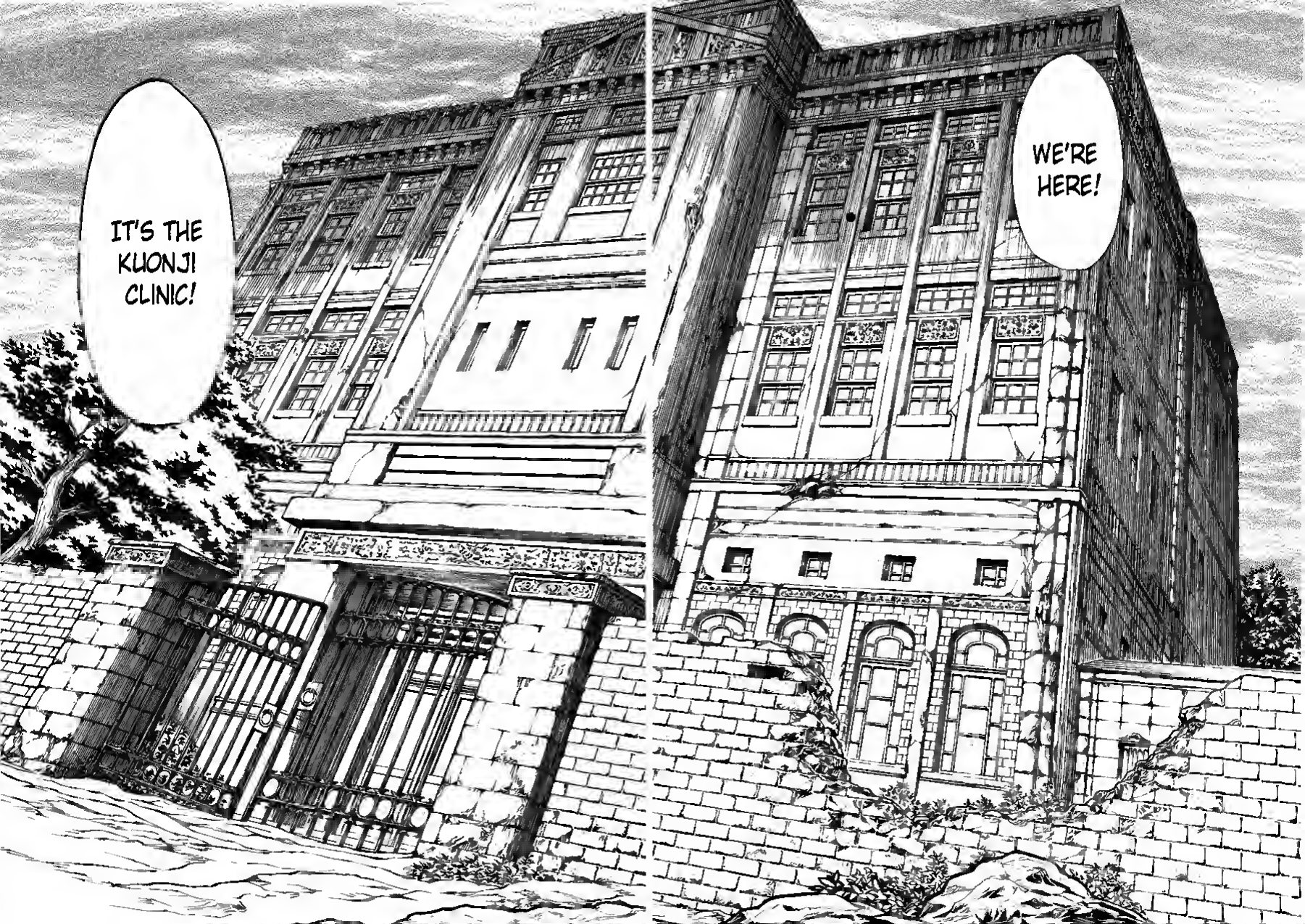
ENO-SAN, THAT'S A GRAVEYARD!


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
HEY!

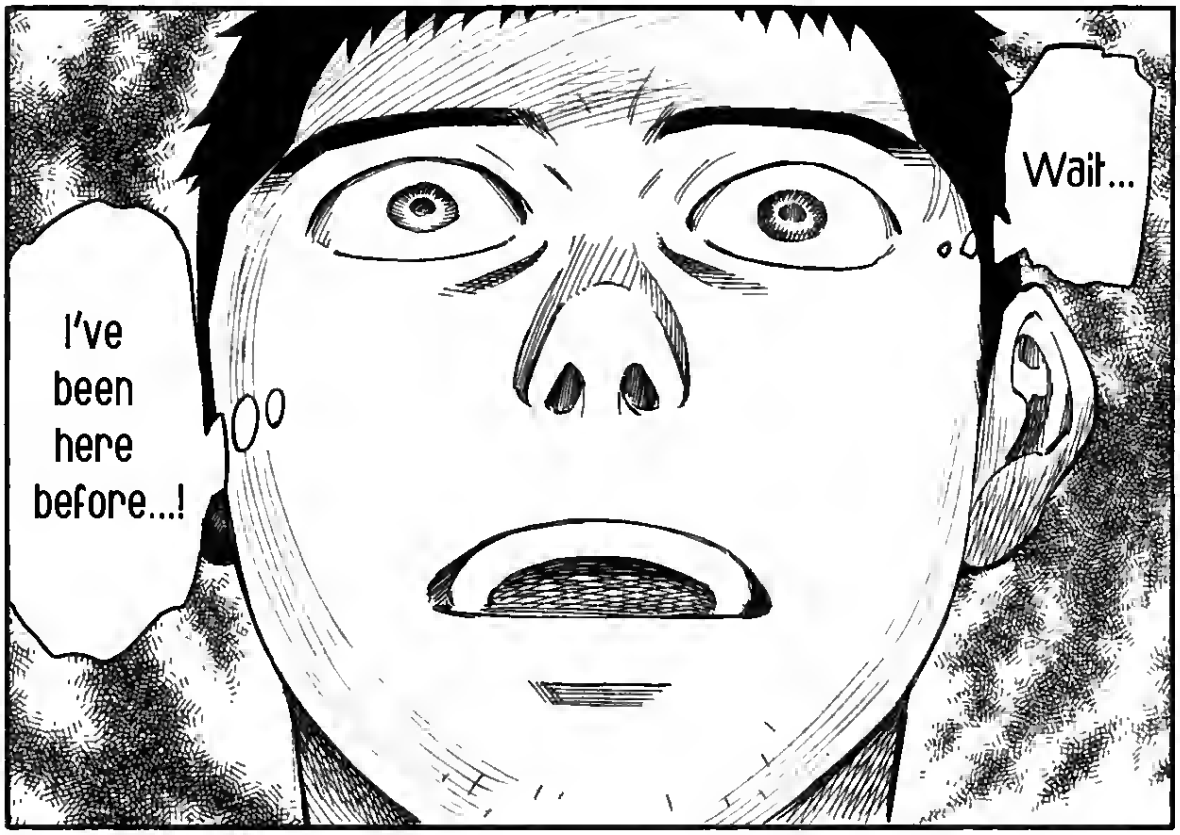
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
SEE? THERE'S A PATH THROUGH HERE.

No... I can't go in there!


DON'T WORRY, SENSEI! IT LOOKS LIKE THE GRAVES ARE WAY OVER THERE.
YOU'RE SUCH A WIMP! DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE SCARED!?
WE CAN'T GO THAT WAY!
IT'S A GRAVE-YARD!!
That's a lie!
COME ON, SEKIGUCHI, PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!
SENSEI! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
If I open my eyes, I'll see something that shouldn't be seen!
It's just like my dream...


IT'S THE KUONJI CLINIC!
WE'RE HERE!

Let's go!
Wow, it's huge!


Wait...
I've been here before...!